

# The 2000 Dubious Achievements!

# Esquire

JANUARY 2001

SEMPER UBI SUB UBI

## Who Will Survive?

De plane!  
De plane!

Before we  
start eating rats,  
I say we cook up  
the Cuban  
kid!

Oops, my  
boobs grew  
again!

So...who  
wants to  
bathe a  
millionaire?

Oy vey!  
Get me  
off this  
fakakta  
island!

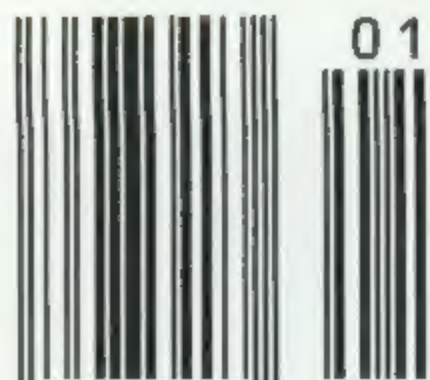
New York  
is where I'd  
rather stay...  
I get allergic  
smelling  
hay!

### THE CASTAWAYS FROM HELL:

Yasir Arafat, Regis  
Philbin, Elián González,  
Bobby Knight, "Senator"  
Hillary Rodham Clinton,  
and Britney Spears.

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January 2001 Vol. 135 / No. 1  
**Esquire**



Patrick Ewing, page 88.

ON THE COVER: Photo illustration by Aaron Goodman. Set design and styling by Lori Seliger. Set construction by Andy Herbest and Tom Newton. Styling assistant, Carmen Campbell.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTIAN WITKIN

**Dubious Achievements**  
2000 Man, that was ugly. War, stocks, W, tires! A final look at the whole awful spectacle: from Gaza to Gore to that grabby little Cuban kid. Plus: 365 Merry Reasons to Kill Yourself, God's Letters to Children, the Existential "Peanuts," and the exclusive Campaign 2000 Man of the Year Battle Royale!  
EDITED BY SHALOM AUSLANDER

**What I've Learned**  
Don Rickles on Hollywood, golf, show business, and the joys of Vegas: "It's like working Ellis Island."  
INTERVIEWED BY MIKE SAGER

**One Murder, Five Writers**  
Last May, Sante and Kenneth Kimes were convicted of the murder of a Manhattan socialite. The body was never found. So whatever happened to Irene Silverman? Five master crime writers imagine five very different outcomes.  
FICTION BY EDNA BUCHANAN, JAMES CRUMLEY, STEPHEN DOBYNS, PETER STRAUB, AND JEFFERY DEEVER

**High Five** A few of the NBA's tallest men pose for some very large close-ups. A celebration of grace and proportion. PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTIAN WITKIN; TEXT BY CHARLES P. PIERCE

**What Is a Pandemic?**  
This year, ten thousand Americans will likely die from hepatitis C. If you're a man between thirty and fifty, there's a 5 percent chance you already have it. Introducing the first great disease of the new century. BY JIM ATKINSON  
Plus: One man's nightmare.

**The Opportunist** In the midst of one of the most horrifying conflicts in the world—the diamond war of Sierra Leone—Nick Karras sees profit potential. A tale of rebels, ministers, mercenaries, bags of cash, a UN embargo, and the most precious commodity on earth. BY JOHN H. RICHARDSON

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## » Style

Updating your luggage rack: the smartest suitcases, carry-ons, and garment bags (*The Guide*, PAGE 55). What to wear for that big day in June (*The Ties—and Suits and Shirts—That Bind*, PAGE 98). To the finest watches add some exotic chic, with these bands in crocodile and lizard, ostrich and alligator (*It's with the Band*, PAGE 110). Julian Schnabel's haunting new movie, *Before Night Falls*, and its stylish, international cast (*Moving Picture*, PAGE 116).



On alligator: Gold watch with crocodile strap (\$42,800) by Audemars Piguet. Page 110.

More things a man should know about style...money...women...culture: esquire online @ [esquire.com](http://esquire.com)

PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL STEELE



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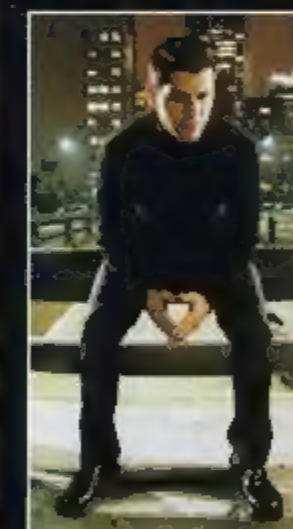
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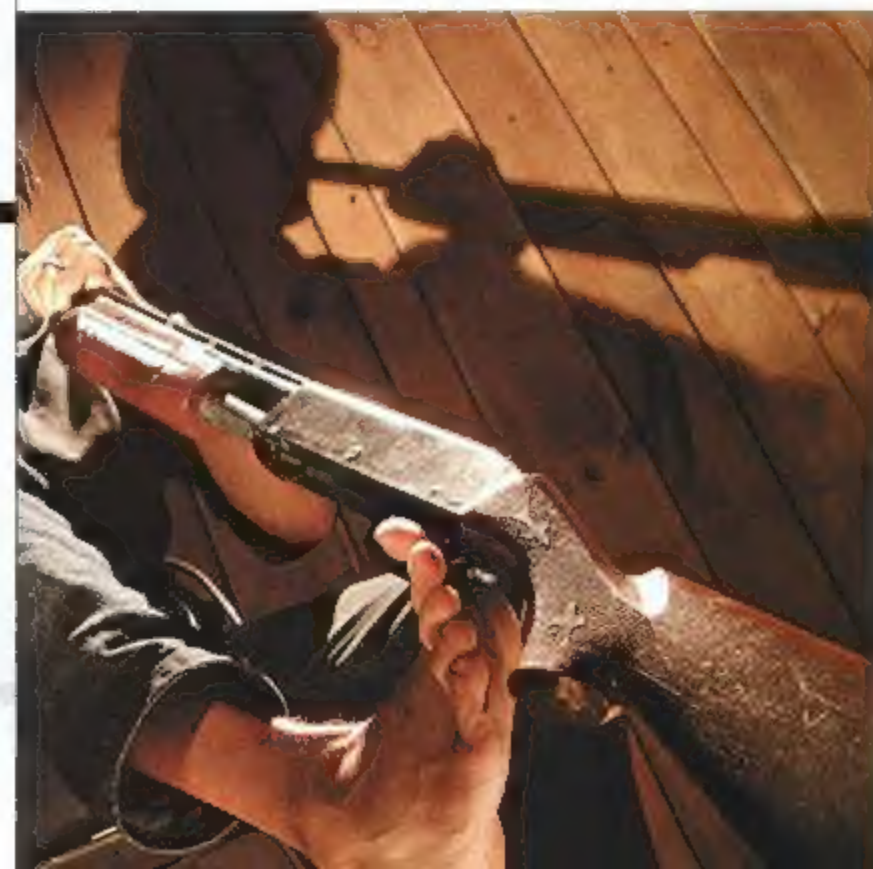
# Contributors



When writer at large **John H. Richardson** first met Nick Karras, an American diamond dealer operating in war-ravaged Sierra Leone, everything about the man raised suspicion. Karras has a weakness for big talk, bodyguards, and private jets. And in Sierra Leone, he has a plan to save the crippled country from itself and make millions in the process. In July, Richardson accompanied Karras to Sierra Leone and discovered a scheme to capitalize on the poverty and despair caused by years of civil war. And in a country so desperate for saints, Richardson found that even a cowboy opportunist like Karras can seem upstanding. "When we read about Sierra Leone, all we see are the headlines. And we want them to be dramatic because it makes a good story," says Richardson, who covered the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle for Esquire last February. "But the headlines go away, and so do the intrepid war reporters and Madeleine Albright, and the people of Sierra Leone are left with Nick Karras or worse. In his twisted way, though, he's probably doing more good than harm. That's what really caught me up and slapped me right in the face. You have to accept the truth for what it is; otherwise, you're in show business." "The Opportunist" begins on page 118.



In May 2000, Sante and Kenneth Kimes, mother and son, were convicted of killing Manhattan heiress Irene Silverman. The case marked one of the few times a murder conviction was dealt in the state of New York when a body wasn't provided as evidence. Silverman's body is still missing. For this month's "One Murder, Five Writers," page 78, Esquire asked five crime novelists, **James Crumley, Stephen Dobyns, Peter Straub, Edna Buchanan, and Jeffery Deaver**, to give their own versions of the story and to imagine a conclusion for Irene Silverman. "I thought it was a brilliant idea, putting an ending on a story that had no closure," says Buchanan, who, besides being the author of eight novels, was a Pulitzer-prize-winning police reporter for *The Miami Herald* for eighteen years. "As a crime reporter, I wanted to write the piece from [Silverman's] point of view because I've always identified with the victim more than with the bad guys. So often their stories are lost."



For more than two decades, painter **Julian Schnabel** has been a force in art circles all over the world. His paintings and sculptures appear in museums in London, New York, Tokyo, and Paris. He's also directed two films. The first, *Basquiat*, detailed painter Jean-Michel Basquiat's sudden rise to fame and his tragic death. And this month marks the opening of his second film, *Before Night Falls*, which received a gush of praise at its premier at the Cannes Film Festival. Schnabel photographed the film's three leading men, Javier Bardem, Andrea Di Stefano, and Olivier Martinez, using a backdrop of his own paintings, for "Moving Picture" (page 116), one of this month's style features. *Before Night Falls* traces the short life of gay Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas, who was persecuted and exiled during Castro's revolution. After reading Arenas's posthumous memoir, Schnabel said he became entranced by the writer's struggle to find freedom for his voice. "I hope people realize that Arenas is not the only person that this happened to," says Schnabel. "There's a whole diaspora of writers from Latin America and other countries that he's emblematic of. He was the Walt Whitman of Cuba, and he gave me this huge palette to react to."

The year 2000 is dead and gone, and luckily we're still alive, which means it's time for the fortieth annual Dubious Achievement Awards (page 60). This year, Esquire commissioned the burning wit and rancor of **Shalom Auslander**, a New York-based writer whose identity and existence have often come into question since his work began appearing on Esquire's Web site last April. We never doubted Auslander's existence, not even as he descended into his hilarious examination of the hell that was 2000. But we just didn't notice his obvious distress signals. Was it the odious burden of making order from chaos that led him to end it all? We may never know. (Esquire laments such a loss, but his copy was in, and, hey, life goes on.) Fortunately, contractual obligations extend beyond the grave, which means that Auslander's weekly Dubious Achievements column will still appear on esquire.com, where the awful pageant will continue unabated.



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# Graceful Advice

Our November cover featured one reason to become a better man—Debra Messing, who inspired a legion of readers to try. Inside the issue, she was joined by four other beautiful women who offered their guidance on what even enlightened men need to know (“Five Women Who Make Us Want to Be a Better Man”).

Simply put, Debra Messing would make me a better man. But, hey, next time could you pick five single women who would improve me? It's hard to be a better man when you want to help people cheat on boyfriends and husbands.

DUANE GILMORE  
Houston, Tex.

A few additions to help you be a better man. Number One: If you're rooting for Dallas and I'm cheering on the Redskins, it's only because I want to get your attention. Number Two: When I choose spinning class over watching the Yankees with you, it's because I want to be a better woman. Number Three: My

## the sound & the fury

morning yoga shouldn't scare you. Use your imagination and think of how flexible I'll be for our evening poses.

MAGGIE WELTER  
Los Angeles, Calif.

### Super Men

In “How to Be a Better Man” (November), many experts told our readers various ways to improve themselves—such as learning the Heimlich Maneuver from Dr. Henry J. Heimlich, how to make ketchup flow, and how to have true courage.

Thank you for “How to Be a Better Man.” Your article taught me how to be a hero. How to be a philanthropist. How to drive like Smokey or the Bandit. It taught me how to disarm an attacker, and it taught me that being a father is more rewarding than wearing the yellow jersey of Lance Armstrong. It taught me how to overcome adversity, and, possibly more important, how to tell a gripping story about it. I thank you for that—and for teaching me how to get the damn ketchup out of the bottle.

ARSALAN IFTIKHAR  
St. Louis, Mo.

Oh, man, tears were stinging as I read Colonel Bud Day's story of his time as a POW (“The Brave Man”). There aren't many men of his stature left on this planet. He's the real article. I asked myself how most men would do under like circumstances; not many would do well, I suppose. Thanks for a great magazine. Don't change a thing.

ELSA MORROW  
Oakdale, Minn.

### Look like 115,000 Bucks

Also in November, photographer Dan Winters visited a number of plastic surgeons to explore the frontier of cosmetic procedures for men in “The Better Man (A Work in Progress).” His amazing pictures were supported by Wil S.

Hylton's reporting on the story behind these men and their new faces, hair, and skin.

I used to think, “Vanity, thy name is woman.” Then I read about Donald Green, a man who wears a twenty-two-carat pinky ring and who spent \$115,000 on plastic surgery for himself. And now he wants to get his wife “done,” too? Spare me from men like this.

JOAN MARY MACEY  
Binghamton, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Esquire* would like to thank the following cosmetic-surgery centers and doctors, who were helpful to Dan Winters in creating this story: The Morrow Institute, Rancho Mirage, California; Dr. John Joseph, Beverly Hills; and Drs. Brian Rosenthal and Oscar Leal, Beverly Hills.

### On the Road Again

Every May and November, executive editor Mark Warren sends writers to the ends of the earth to tell our readers about the best places under the sun. This November, Bucky McMahon found himself in Monkey River, Belize, for “Percival Gordon, King of the Howlers.”

Several years ago, I took a trip similar to McMahon's. For three days, my guide and I wove through the mangrove swamps of northeastern Costa Rica in a fourteen-foot boat with an old Evinrude motor. Along a jungle river, we spotted howler monkeys, Jesus Christ lizards, and water buffalo. Thanks for returning me to a pleasant memory of that excursion and for providing an image of it for countless others.

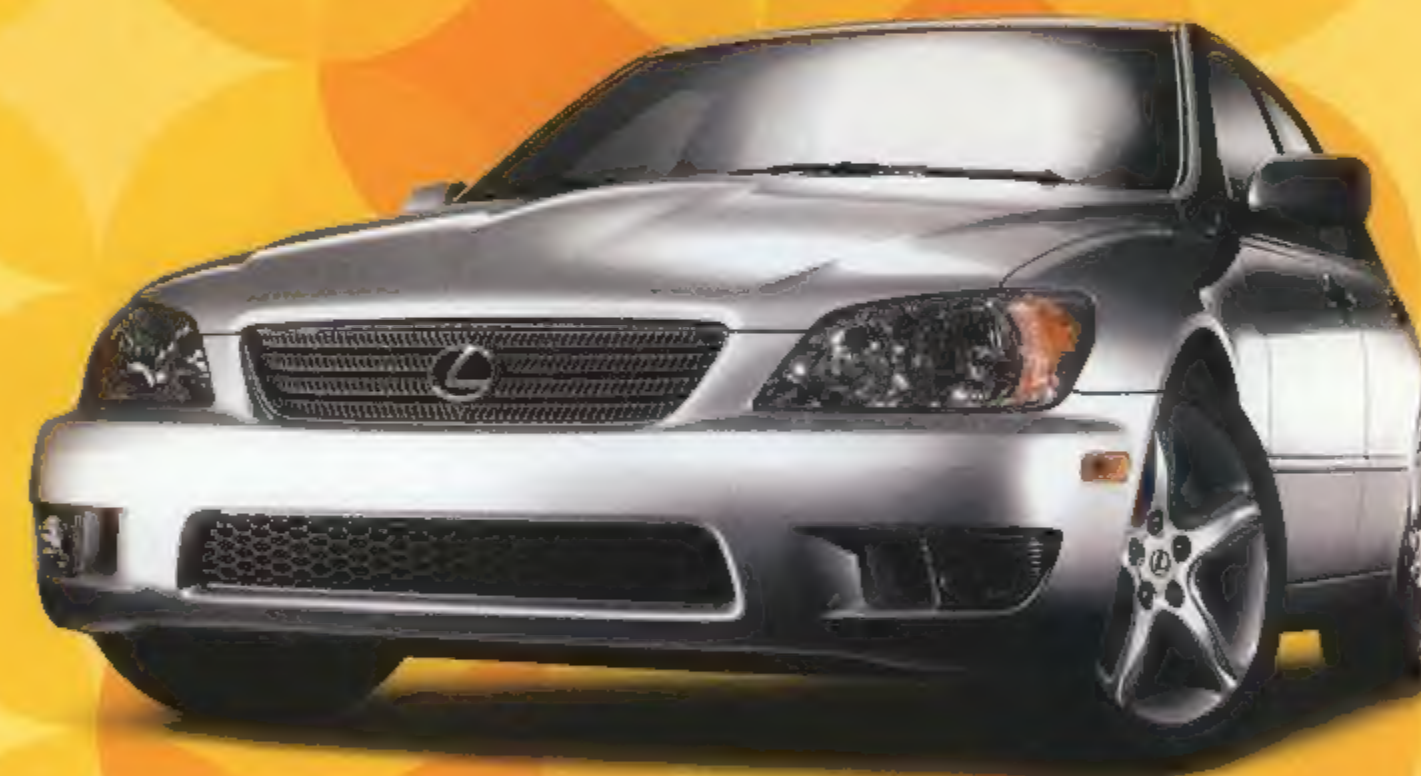
JACK WENDELKEN  
Detroit, Mich.

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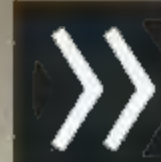
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# Man at His Best

## The January Agenda

A little note to **Robin Tunney**, she who dangles so frequently from some ghastly precipice in her harrowing new movie, *Vertical Limit*: We have thoughts (one thought, really) about this mountain-climbing business, young lady, which is to say, Absolutely not. (Yes, *Vertical Limit* is just a movie, but someone had to climb up a mountain to make the thing, are we wrong? Get down here, people!) We're just saying we find no shortage of "peak experience"-type experiences available to mark the annual replacement of the Garfield calendar, things less likely to feature death-by-splattering in some godforsaken icy gorge (apologies to the various lamas and travel agents). For openers, we're right behind Captain Kirk on our rescreening of *2001*—see, it now is the year 2001 (see page 26). We are pleased that Colorado State University is administering the International Biodiversity Observation Year, even if we do find the acronym IBOY somewhat not right. And we're as giddy as Phil Collins at a discount back waxer's (we have *no idea* what that means) because we have been apprised by some smug-ass rocket scientist that *this* January 1 is the actual, bona fide dawning of the new millennium, and that *this* time the bubbly's flowing cheap and ready and the maltre d's aren't nearly so cocky and the hotel rooms are practically regular price. Boys, we are in the catbird seat when it comes to bloated heraldry of arbitrary dates: Woo-damned-hoo! And in the ensuing days, why, yes, perhaps we are ready for some football, thank you for asking.



PHOTOGRAPH BY PATRIK ANDERSSON



# The Agenda » Week by Week

1

Oh, how to sleep it off on Jan. One? The FedEx Orange Bowl? The more fruit-inclusive OurHouse.com

Florida Citrus Bowl? The AT&T Rose Bowl? The Southwestern Bell Cotton Bowl? Or we could figure out what this Philadelphia Mummers Parade is about. It is about well-armed Swedes called Mummers who dress as clowns, perform little dances, and demand "Give us whiskey, give us gin / Open the door and let us in." Our advice: Don't.

2

On the 12th, Rush Limbaugh turns 50; Howard Stern turns 47. In related

news, now we're talking chickfest: Note to self about the Annual Fancy Rat and Mouse Show, which you could attend on the 13th in Bloomington, California, but won't. From the show's creators: "As urban sprawl continues to limit the space needed to keep dogs and cats, rats and mice as pets are emerging as an ideal substitute."

3

for Sundance (18th through 28th) or the snarlier edgier Slamdance (20th through

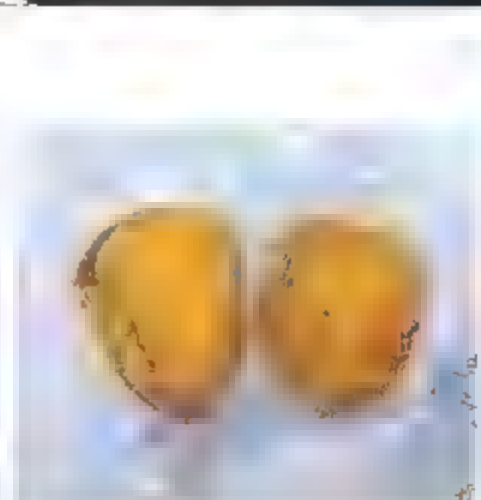
27th), but if not, perhaps you want to continue the football bowl-a-thon. Here's the best bet yet: the Delchamps Senior Bowl on the 20th at Ladd-Peebles Stadium in Mobile, Alabama. All-star seniors (in college, not the AARP) and real, live NFL coaches pack in more than 40,000 fans and have raised nearly \$2 million for charity since 1989.

4

(If it's airworthy these days)—which, incidentally, toasts its 25th anniversary this very January 21st—for the Paris ready-to-wear

men's shows, the 26th through the 29th. But would you, even if you could? No, for it's the fattest and laziest grandmother of all bowls, and the one with the best advertising: The allegedly Super one rounds out the month on the 28th. Count the dot-com commercials on one hand!

## Man at His Best



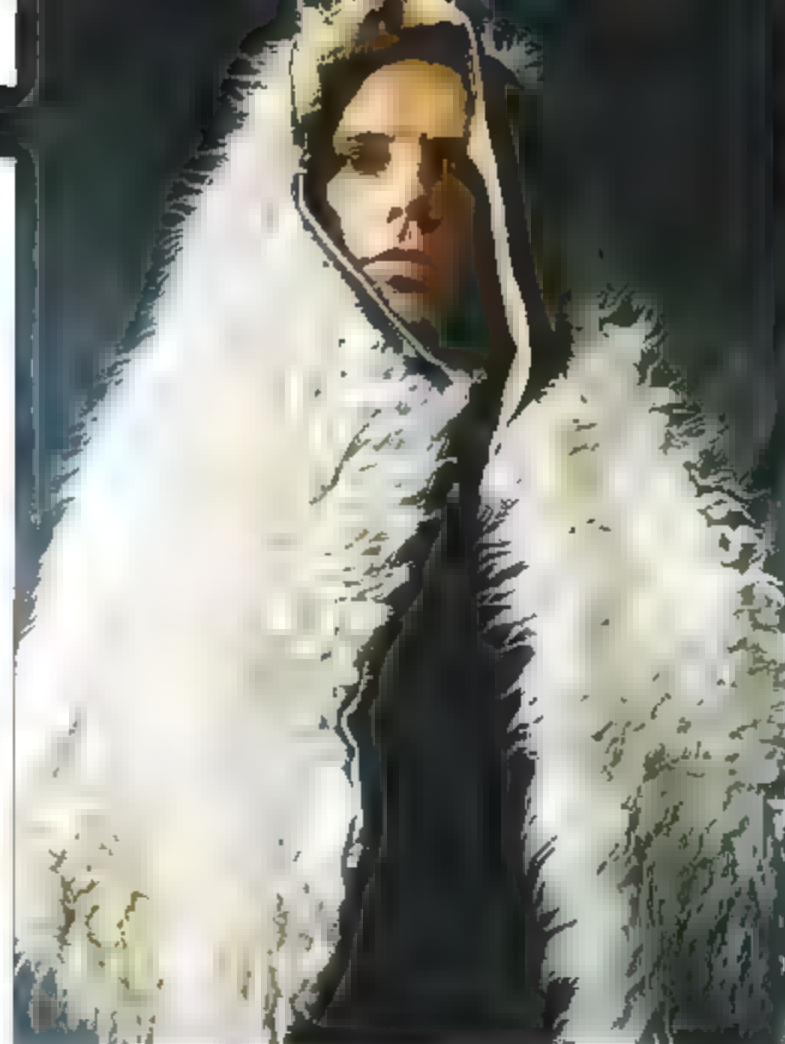
### You Think You're Cold?

It may be 15 degrees in New York, 10 in Boston and 10 in Chicago, but there are places where the winter cold doesn't begin to describe it. So where, with this flavor of complainers, do they have the greatest right to whine?

—International Falls, Minnesota, holds the official title: The Icebox of the Nation, and acts on all the network morning shows as spokesperson for miserably cold places to live. During January, temperatures reach -40, and townsfolk keep busy by bowling with frozen turkeys. But it's lawyers, in turkeys, that make International Falls the coldest place in the nation.

—A small town called Fraser, Colorado, once did claim to be the Icebox of the West. Fraser has the lowest winter temperatures in the world, with freezing air sinking into the Fraser Valley from November all the way through March. But Fraser lost the right to national Iceboxhood after International Falls challenged and won in 1988 and walked away with the title.

—The national record for the lowest temperature is held by Prospect Creek, Alaska, which hit -80 back in 1917. In winter, plumes of smoke rise out of chimneys, freeze, then sink to the ground, making it difficult for citizens to form daily complaints about the weather because their breath turns to snow straight out of their mouths. —B.R. AND M.F.A. FR



In his ten years as a music photographer, Danny Clinch has taken legendary shots of everyone from Michael Stipe to Johnny Cash. This month, Razorfish Studios will release *When the Iron Bird Flies* (\$40), a book of his photographs from the last four Tibetan Freedom concerts. The compilation features an eclectic mix of top-bill musicians, including this shot of Cult leading man Ian Astbury. It's one coffee-table book that you won't use as a coaster.

### Rule No. 38:



Rule No. 39:  
Rule No. 73:  
Rule No. 88:

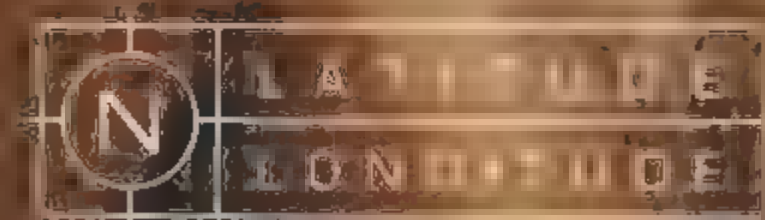
### MACH SCHNELL

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Model          | 2001 Jaguar XK8                         |
| Price          | \$100,000                               |
| Engine         | 4.9L V8                                 |
| 0-60           | 5.5 sec                                 |
| Top Speed      | 155 mph                                 |
| MPG (City/Hwy) | 18/24                                   |
| Features       | Leather interior, sunroof, alloy wheels |
| Notes          | Available in 2001                       |



BY AMY SWEET MA

hecht's, robinsons may, lord & taylor



NAUTICA

A NEW ADVENTURE IN FRAGRANCE





## Reindeer Games

## Reindeer Games

The one thing, besides a commercial or two, that won't let you down this Super Bowl Sunday—if you're handy in the kitchen



» **SMOKY THE BEER** When they finally

» **SMOKY THE BEER** When they finally make me NFL commissioner, my first decree will outlaw ramby-ramby beers at all football festivities. In their stead, I will proffer a manlier staple, something to slug from steins on a cold Green Bay day or mug up to at home while the fireplace is roaring and the venison chews are roiling away on the stove. Something with the strength, grit, and girth of an offensive tackle like Aecht Schlenkerla Rauchbier, from Bamberg, Germany. Rauchbier mal is smoked over Bavarian beechwood logs, giving this beer its deeply satisfying, smoky flavor perfect to drive away the January chill on Super Bowl Sunday. The residents of Bamberg, where rauchbier is the local specialty, are reputed to drink more beer per capita than any other people inlager-loving Germany, so they should know. Just don't ask them about real football—that's where you lose them. For

information, call 914-238-7100



## VENISON CHILI

SERVES 6

and reserving meat as it browns and adding more oil sparingly if needed. When all the venison is browned, return it along with the bacon and onion mixture to the pot, stirring well.

» Add spice mixture and cook, stirring until mixture has turned a deep, rich mahogany brown and everything is coated, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes and stock, and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer, uncovered, until chili thickens, about an hour. Taste for seasoning, adding salt and black pepper if needed, and continue simmering for another 30 minutes.

» When you are ready to serve the chili, add beans and remaining green chilis and simmer for about another five minutes. Stir in cornmeal and serve immediately.

**INGREDIENTS** About 3 tbsp vegetable oil • 1/2 lb smoky bacon (slab bacon cut into small cubes, or thickly sliced bacon that has been chopped) • 3 yellow onions, chopped (about 3 cups) • 6 cloves garlic, peeled and finely minced • 3 whole green chilis (canned), seeded and chopped • 2 tsp kosher salt • 3 1/2 lb venison tenderloin, cut into 3/4-inch cubes • 1 cup canned tomatoes, crushed and with their juices • 6 cups beef stock • black pepper to taste • 2 15 oz cans red kidney beans, rinsed under cool water, drained, and tossed with 1/4 cup apple-cider vinegar • 1 tbsp yellow cornmeal

**A SPICE MIX CONTAINING** 1/3 cup ancho or other mild chile powder • 3 tbsp Mexican oregano • 3 tbsp chipotle powder • 3 tbsp

ground cumin • 2 tbsp ground cinnamon  
• 1/2 tsp cayenne or to taste

» In a large stockpot or flameproof casserole dish over moderate heat, warm the oil until hot but not smoking. Add bacon and cook until the fat is rendered and bacon is almost crisp, about 10 minutes. Remove bacon with slotted spoon (to leave behind as much of the bacon drippings as possible) and reserve. Add onions, sautéing until edges begin to color, about 12 minutes. Add garlic and half the green chills and cook, stirring frequently, until garlic is golden, about 3 minutes. Remove this mixture with slotted spoon and set aside with bacon.

» Working in small batches, sprinkle venison with salt and sear cubes on all sides, removing

**BAUME & MERCIER**  
GENEVE 1830





# Red, White & Blues

KEN BURNS'S LATEST DOCUMENTARY, JAZZ, GETS TO THE HEART OF THE SOUL

Ken Burns is on a mission in search of America. The documentary filmmaker who single-handedly rescued public television from itself with the critically acclaimed *The Civil War* and *Baseball* now brings us *Jazz*, an exhaustive ten-part film tour through the history and legacy of the American music medium airing this month on PBS. Camera in hand, he spent six years and 500 hours of tape toppling tombstones, peeping into cathouse windows, and counting the cars on the New Jersey Turnpike to bring us a glimpse of what we've all come to look for. —ROBERT SCHEFFLER

**Man, if you gotta ask why jazz?** There was a point in working on *Baseball* where I knew in my gut that I wasn't working on *The Civil War* and its sequel but on a trilogy. Through jazz, I have the opportunity to deal with the 20th century in all its glory—civil rights, drugs, and sex. I love the fact that jazz, almost at its heart, is about sex—born in whorehouses. It's this incredibly American mating call, much more sophisticated than what we hear on the radio today.

**You always seem to want to tell the story, not one story.** I'm lucky—I found something I like to work with in one way, the subjects aren't that important because the bigger theme is America.

**These historical tales resonate with you. Why?** My mother died when I was 11 and once told a friend that never thought I achieved closure on her death. He said to me, "What do you think you do for a living? You wake the dead." Who the hell do you think you're trying to wake up? And so for all my animating questions about who we are as Americans, the question is also, "Who am I?" That's why no project has been more satisfying than jazz, because jazz music contains this mitigating wisdom that tolerates contradictions in our lives.

**Life and death?** Yes. To me, jazz is this great cavalry arriving to the rescue, drinking in the moment, accepting it in fact, after spending the last six years in the thrall of Louis Armstrong. My anxiety about my own mortality is tempered by the fact that I might actually have a chance to see this guy blow Gabriel out of the clouds. I know that sounds corny.

## ANSWER FELLA

I once heard that there's a story behind a deck of playing cards, i.e., the suicide king had his heart broken by the queen of hearts. Is this true? What's the tale?

If only it were that simple. The true story is that the queen of hearts was once wed to the king of hearts, until he caught her giving the jack of diamonds a royal flush, whereupon he yanked the jack off, grabbed the nearby ace of spades, and clubbed them both to death.

But seriously. Playing cards are cultural artifacts tracing back at least a millennium, beginning in China before A.D. 1000. By the 13th century, they had reached the Middle East; the oldest known deck, from Egypt's Mamluk period, already consisted of 52 cards.

The Islamic suits were adapted variously in southern Europe in the late 14th century, and



figures and caricatures were added. The pattern that we now consider standard—hearts, clubs, spades, diamonds, kings, queens, and jacks—originated in France in the mid-15th century. The French liked to use representations of specific persons on their court cards, but they varied from deck to deck, place to place, and time to time. These featured kings supposed to represent Charlemagne, Alexander the Great, Caesar, and King David, and queenly portrayals of Pallas, Greek goddess of war and wisdom, Helen of Troy, and Rachel and Judith, two Old Testament heroines. Speculation abounds about the jacks, but most experts agree that they are based on La Hire, one of Joan of Arc's comrades, Hector, a prince of Troy, Judas Maccabaeus, an ancient Jewish warrior, and Brad Pitt.

Got a question? Send it to Answer Fella, Esquire, 250 West 55th Street, New York, NY 10019. Or visit [esquire.com/talk](http://esquire.com/talk).



Among the music icons honored in *Jazz* are Louis Armstrong (above), Charlie Parker (far left), and Billie Holiday. The ten-part series will air on PBS starting January 8.

**Besides temper your fear of death, what would you like to see happen with jazz?** I'd love for people to think about the ways in which our history need not be conceived as a political, military narrative, so one can come to terms with the statement that Louis Armstrong was as important as any American president in the 20th century.

The House of Tanqueray reminds you that drinking irresponsibly can land you in a spot of bother.

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# The Wines to Watch

A RUNDOWN OF WHAT'S TO COME IN 2001

A \$135 BOUTIQUE NAPA VALLEY CABERNET OFFERS PART OF its production in mass-market screw-cap bottles. The Olive Garden puts vino in its TV ads. The best restaurant wine-by-the-glass program on the planet is at Walt Disney World. New Year's news flash: Americans, finally, are wine drinkers. Still, most of us have yet to venture away from cabernet and chardonnay, the American grape clichés. I propose a New Year's resolution: Try this year's all-stars, the new grapes that those who know are reaching for. Trade in that overbearing oaky chardonnay for the crisp, clean, and very hot Riesling, and lose the cabernet for an up-and-coming Spanish Rioja or Ribera. When they're good, these wines have what it takes to complement, and not clobber, the give-it-to-me-back ened, mustard-crusted, wasabi-faced American diet. —ANOREA IMMER



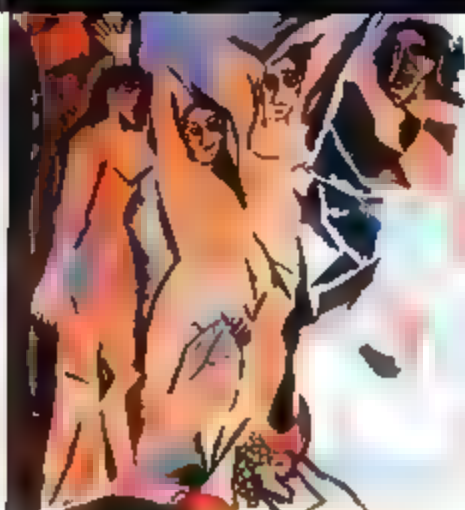
» **Ribera del Duero TINTO PESQUERA, \$25** One of Spain's most famous wines, and worthy of the notoriety **ABADIA RETUERTA CUVÉE EL CAMPANARIO, \$50** Just outside the demarcated Ribera area, but setting standards for the style. Amazing intensity. **CONDADO DE HAZA, \$23.** A newer estate with the same ownership and quality as Pesquera.



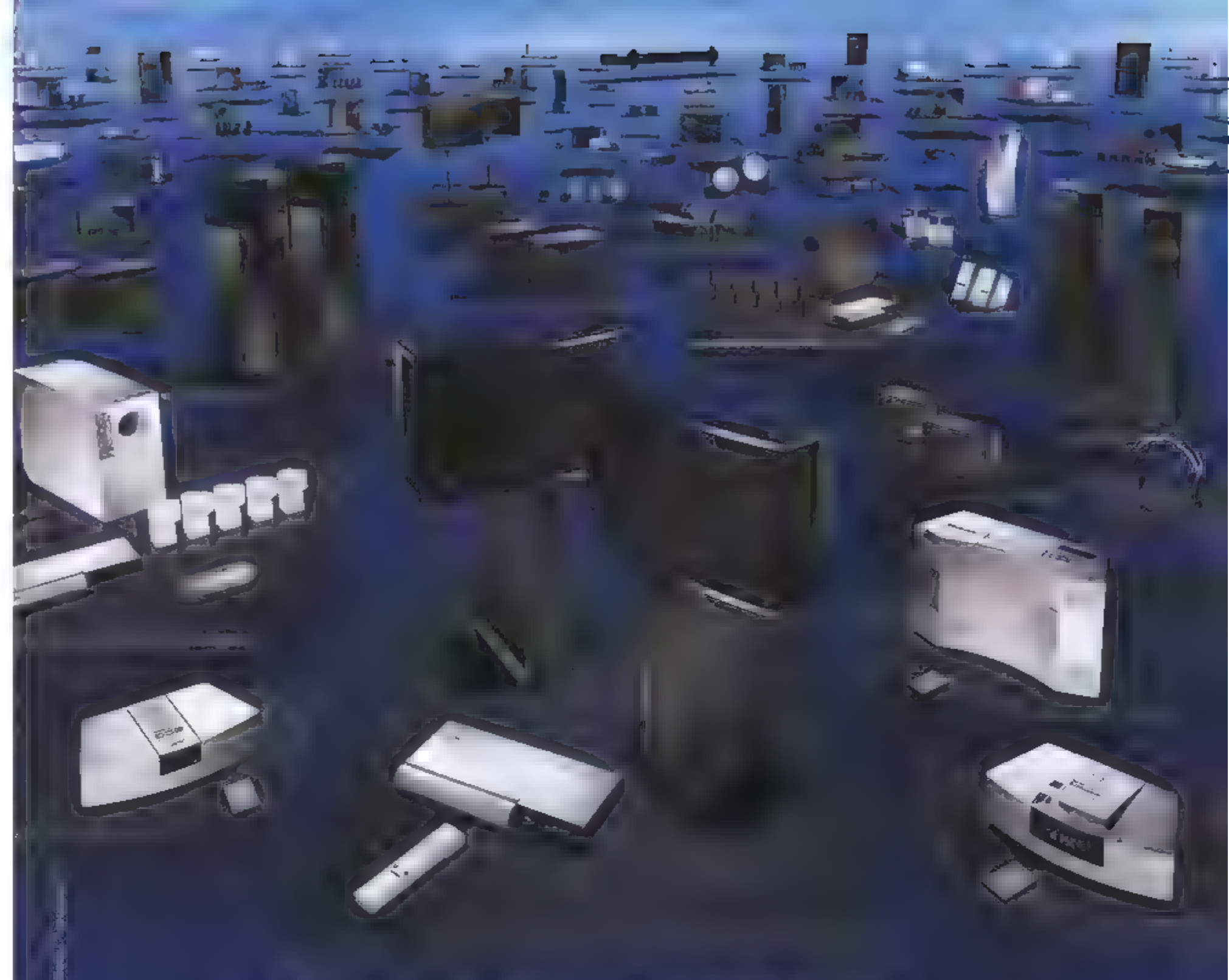
» **Rioja MARQUÉS DE MURRIETA COLECCIÓN 2100, \$11** A favorite value selection. **FINCA ALLENDE, \$17** Tastes as if it should be three times as expensive. **MARQUÉS DE ARIENZO, \$12-\$25** Outstanding reserve wines and a value bottling called Crianza that's one of the best. **LA RIOJA ALTA RESERVA, \$30** One of the classic producers, cellar worthy because it gets better with age.



» **KENDALL-JACKSON VINTNER'S RESERVE, CALIFORNIA, \$10** The best value Riesling made in America. **ERIOICA, COLUMBIA VALLEY, WASHINGTON STATE, \$20** A top German Riesling vintner comes stateside. **VILLA MARIA PRIVATE BIN, NEW ZEALAND, \$13** Try every New Zealand Riesling you can find. **GROSSET POLISH HILL, CLARE VALLEY, AUSTRALIA, \$23** An intense, rinky complex red.



«**The Endorsement: Painting by Numbers** It's not what you'd call art, or course. What it is is this: the answer when the howling gales turn your recreational imperatives indoors. It's coloring for grown-ups. It is dipping a brush in paint and touching it to paper, which you don't usually do. Maybe you're a surgeon or a cop or a plumber—doesn't matter. Your rendition of "The Old Mill" or "Neuschwanstein Castle" is as good as anybody's. Eventually, maybe you'll create an actual painting without numerical assistance. That's what's great about paint-by-numbers. The original Craft House company still makes em' in Toledo (try a hobby shop, where they sell for \$4.99 and up); next spring, they're even the subject of a Smithsonian exhibition. And they're harder than you remember: "Seaside Fury" and my horse has purple ears. **For information, call 800-537-0295.** TED ALLEN



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# 2001: A Review

A look at how the science-fiction classic holds up in this, its namesake year

BY WILLIAM SHATNER

"2001: A Space Odyssey is a countdown to tomorrow, a road map to human destiny, a quest for the infinite. It is a dazzling Academy Award-winning visual achievement, a compelling drama of man vs. machine, a stunning meld of music and motion. It may be the masterwork of Stanley Kubrick (who co-wrote the screenplay with Arthur C. Clarke) and it will likely excite, inspire and enthrall for generations."

At least that's what it says on the box. And now that we've finally arrived at 2001 ourselves, I thought I'd take a look back at what those sci-fi geniuses and cultural scribes predicted way back in 1968. I loved 2001, I saw it when it first came out, and I saw it several times after that, and there's been a 20-year gap since the last time I looked at it. So I watched it again just recently, in honor of the year, and let me tell you straight out: It is as confusing now as it was then.

I really wanted to believe and admire all of the wonderful, portentous beauty of the film. I mean, who am I to fly in the face of Spielberg (who likened it to the formative Big Bang of his filmmaking generation), Clarke, and, for God's sake, Kubrick? That wonderful shot of the turning bone becoming a spaceship—your heart leaps every time you see it. And yet the goddamned opening with the badly suited stuntmen takes a long time. I watched on and realized that almost everything in this movie takes a long time. And then you get to the ending.

You could rationalize old age turning to new life or the fact that you might age at a slower rate in space and come back home younger than the old people who were once your peers, fine. But why is it set in a Victorian house? And why does Keir Dullea knock over the glass of wine? These questions go unanswered as another transition creeps along. The spaceship takes so long to get into the orbiting satellite that it requires several well-known composers to bring us in.

Why do I have to work so hard at understanding an ending when the rest of the movie is, essentially, a short story? That damn HAL won't let Dullea back in the spaceship, and Dullea forces his way in and takes out a few boxes, and HAL dies. That's it, folks. That's the plot. It's a simple elegant one-acter, unfortunately, when I'm going to be 139 minutes closer to death before the credits roll. I'd prefer a complete three-act plot.

2001: A Space Odyssey is an important motion picture, with effects that were brilliant and innovative for its time, and it does hold up in a way, but I

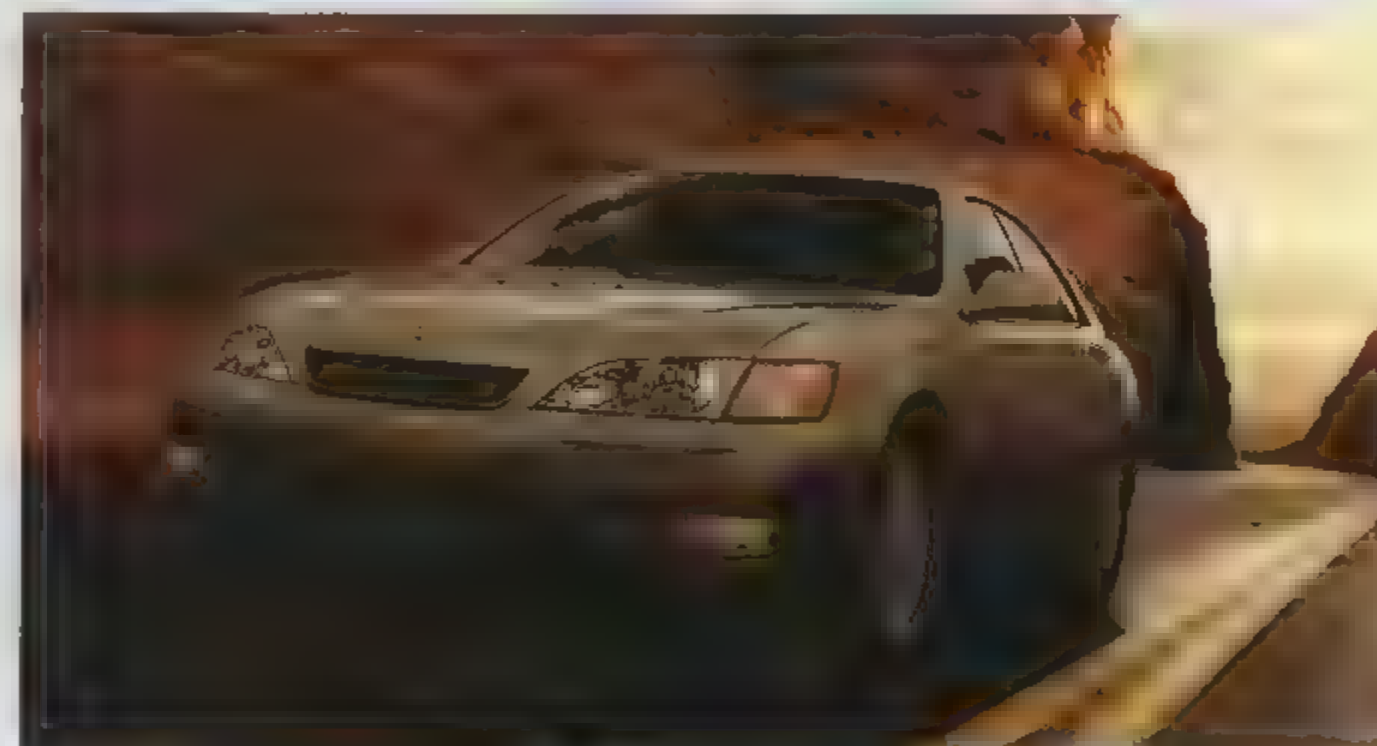
wanted to be as thrilled now as I was when I first saw it. It's a little like seeing an old love 30 years later. You see intimations of beauty and romance, but it's not quite the same.

»What makes the vocal artist of Priceless.com commercials, who also appears in the new Sandra Bullock vehicle *Miss Congeniality*, qualified to pass judgment on a sci-fi classic? His lesser-known credits include directing 1989's *Star Trek* and writing a number of science-fiction novels, including *Star Trek: Preserver* (Pocket Books, \$24) in bookstores now, and commanding a Constitution-class starship for five years.

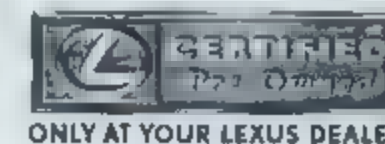


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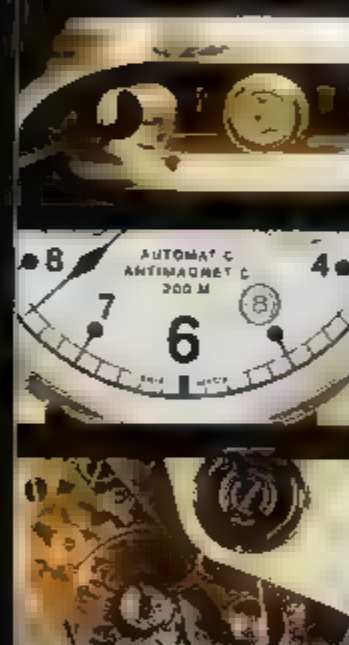
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## MARKET. Granny Stocks Running Amok

SITTING TIGHT ON OLD STALWARTS IS SUDDENLY MORE FUN THAN THE KOREAN STOCK MARKET



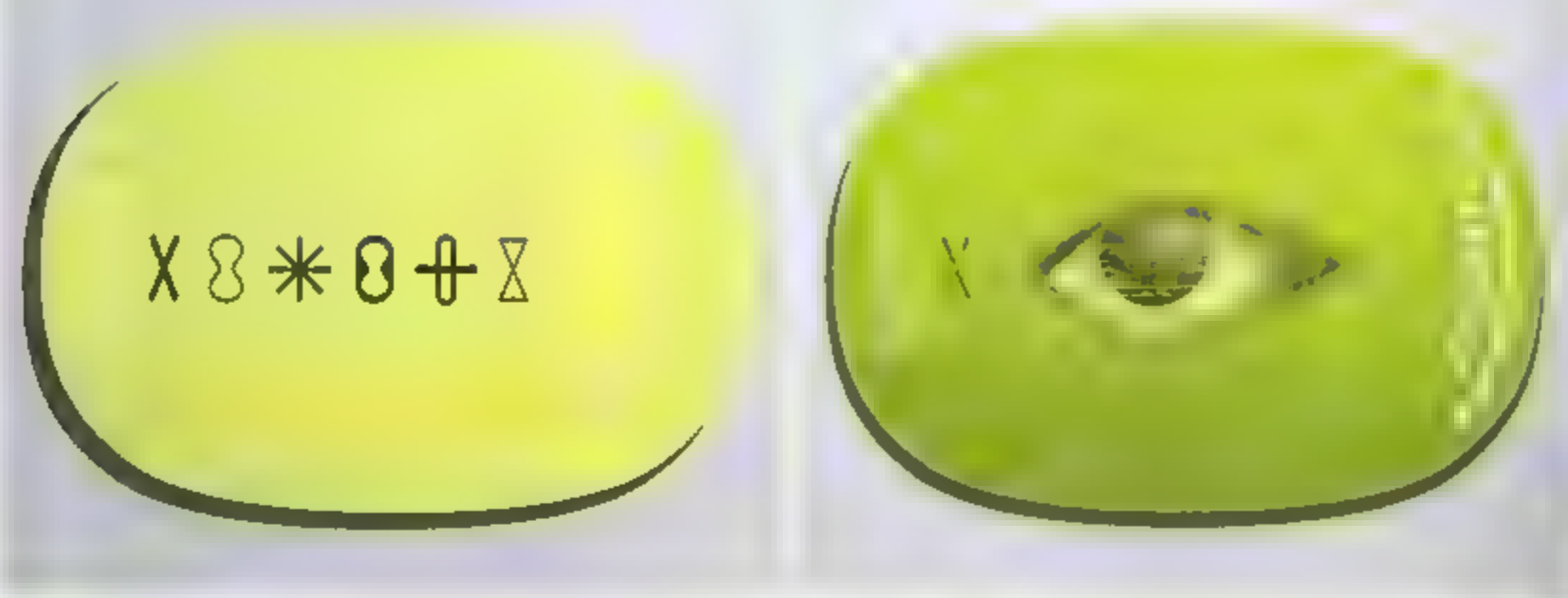
By Ted C. Fishman AT&T spanked me hard. I've bought shares in waves over the past year and a half. I bit once when the stock was trading around 52 and another time when it was around 37. Of course, I thought I had played the stock brilliantly each time. Both purchases seemed ridiculously cheap for a company with such might and bra npower. Sure, the giant telecom was having a difficult time navigating the New Economy, but I was confident that it would right itself and vanquish all rivals. I stayed wrong for a long time, blinded by AT&T's long-deserved reputation as an old reliable. Then, even before the announced dismemberment of the company into four separate units this fall, I began to learn a lesson about AT&T and formerly stolid companies like it. They no longer act at all like blue chips. I'd be much better off if I'd thought of

AT&T and a host of other old-line but now beat-up stocks as more akin to the highly speculative corners of my portfolio, the spots I have filled with amok running tech stocks and emerging-market funds. Riding these beat-up old economy warhorses does not make for a long, inevitably profitable journey so much as a wild run that could easily end up very badly. So, after the volatile markets of

2000, it may be time to look at them for what they are: highly speculative stocks. Seen that way, the warhorses might very well reward a risky play with enormous returns.

I don't usually buy companies of the big, stable sort, the kind that used to be the stalwarts in the portfolios of long-term blue-chip investors. The backbone of my portfolio is a collection of mutu-





### If I Designed the Money

It would be a smart device in a soft, cornerless, flat form, like a flexible charge card. It would become the only money you'd need or want, replacing all credit cards, coins, and paper currency while providing instant access to data on account balances and ever-changing currency conversion. It would replace your personal IDs, incorporating information from your business and social security cards, as well as your licenses, passport, and green card. One side would have a hologram of your eye, which could be read by a retinal scanner for identification; the other side would have a bar code scanner, a magnetic swipe, and voice and digital displays. In fact, you would no longer need a wallet.

Karim Rashid

a. funds that serve the purpose of the old "granny stocks." Many of these stocks are the ones recommended by my uncle Bert, a stockbroker of the old school who passed away before the New Economy reared its uneven head. Bert had a rule of thumb: "Put your mouth where your money is." That described most of the once so-called Nifty Fifty stocks of AT&T's class. McDonald's, Proctor & Gamble, Gillette, and Coke were some others, along with Xerox, Polaroid, Kodak, and Motorola. Reliably of more recent but already faded vintage include Ericsson, Gap, and Lucent Technologies (a high-tech stock a granny would have had in her portfolio, since it was a spin-off of AT&T).

Take a look at the recent swings in a few of these stocks. By the fourth quarter, AT&T's fifty-two-week range ran from around 61 to 21. Lucent's ranged between 84 and 20. Polaroid, 28 to 8. Kodak, from 77 to 35. Motorola, from 61 to 20. And Xerox, from 43 to under 7 a share. I should add that the tops of the ranges for these stocks all came early in the year, while the lows were struck this fall, when these once mighty issues were all cut at least in half, or, in the case of hapless Xerox, by 83 percent. Ouch.

Traditional money managers would now group these former grants into the "value stock"

category: stocks whose shares look undervalued and overlooked in light of their current earnings or salable assets. Different investors look for value in different places, weighing some combination of dividend yields, price-to-book ratios, or price-to-earnings ratios. "You could definitely make the case that AT&T and presumably its future fractional companies is a value stock today," says Michael Hodel, who follows the company for Morningstar. "At twenty-two dollars a share, the business is clearly worth more than the market is valuing it." Another usually overlooked trait of value stocks is their tendency to be more volatile than otherwise similar sectors of the stock market. One way traders quantify volatility is by measuring how violently a stock has moved over time; a higher number means more violent moves. According to Ibbotson Associates, the Chicago firm that is the de facto memory bank of the entire securities industry, large-cap value stocks are decidedly more volatile over the very long run than large-cap stocks overall. Taken as a group, value stocks of the kind AT&T is today were churned about considerably more between 1928 and 1999 than large-cap stocks as a whole (28 percent volatility versus 20 percent).

Value stocks are distinct from the so-called growth stocks, those of companies that have particularly strong earnings, high growth rates, and low or nonexistent dividend rates. Value-stock investors buy shares when they are dirt cheap. Growth-

stock investors buy shares even when they are ridiculously high. Careful money managers like to have some of each. But what do we do with shares of companies like the old stalwarts, which are pricey growth companies in March and residents of Wall Street's remainder bin in October?

Today, when I look at the old standbys, I don't see value companies with 28 percent volatility. I see speculative stocks, each one of them wildly volatile. Many, such as AT&T, Lucent, and Kodak, represent the darkest side of the frenetic tech stocks. They all have been beaten up because they have bet badly, so far at least, on how to transform themselves in a new age. Proctor & Gamble and McDonald's have had trouble navigating their own fiercely competitive niches. What characterizes all the stocks is that investors—including Wall Street pros—simply don't know what to make of their futures. Investors don't like to pay too dearly for uncertainty. Even last year's go-go tech investors have learned they ought to pay less where the future is deeply unsure.

With this new volatility, many old stalwarts are starting to resemble dot-coms. In October, Lucent's volatility (measured over one hundred trading days) was an eye-popping 90 percent. AT&T's was 72 percent, and Gillette's 87.5 percent. Xerox's was an astonishing 147 percent, a measure that, if predictive, would mean that the stock could double or halve several times a year. In fact, numbers [continued on page 130]

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This medicine can help many men when it is used as prescribed by their doctors. However, VIAGRA is not for everyone. It is intended for use only by men who have a condition called erectile dysfunction. VIAGRA must never be used by men who are taking medicines that contain nitrates of any kind, at any time. This includes nitroglycerin. If you take VIAGRA with any nitrate medicine your blood pressure could suddenly drop to an unsafe or life threatening level.

**What is VIAGRA?**

VIAGRA is a pill used to treat erectile dysfunction (impotence) in men. It can help many men who have erectile dysfunction get and keep an erection when they become sexually excited (stimulated). You will not get an erection just by taking this medicine. VIAGRA helps a man with erectile dysfunction get an erection only when he is sexually excited.

**How Sex Affects the Body**

When a man is sexually excited, the penis rapidly fills with more blood than usual. The penis then expands and hardens. This is called an erection. After the man is done having sex, this extra blood flows out of the penis back into the body. The erection goes away. If an erection lasts for a long time (more than 6 hours), it can permanently damage your penis. You should call a doctor immediately if you ever have a prolonged erection that lasts more than 4 hours.

Some conditions and medicines interfere with this natural erection process. The penis cannot fill with enough blood. The man cannot have an erection. This is called erectile dysfunction. It becomes a frequent problem.

During sex, your heart works harder. Therefore, sexual activity may not be advisable for people who have heart problems. Before you start any treatment for erectile dysfunction, ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex. If you have chest pains, dizziness, or nausea during sex, stop having sex and immediately tell your doctor you have had this problem.

**How VIAGRA Works**

VIAGRA enables many men with erectile dysfunction to respond to sexual stimulation. When a man is sexually excited, VIAGRA helps the penis fill with enough blood to cause an erection. After sex is over, the erection goes away.

**VIAGRA is Not for Everyone**

As noted above, **How Sex Affects the Body**, ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough for sexual activity.

If you take any medicines that contain nitrates—either regularly or as needed—you should never take VIAGRA. If you take VIAGRA with any nitrate medicine or prescription drug containing nitrates, your blood pressure could suddenly drop to an unsafe level. You could get a dizzy faint or even have a heart attack or stroke. Nitrates are found in many prescription medicines that are used to treat angina (chest pain due to heart disease), such as:

- nitroglycerin (sprays, ointments, skin patches or pastes, and tablets that are swallowed or dissolved in the mouth)
- isosorbide mononitrate and isosorbide dinitrate (tablets that are swallowed, chewed or dissolved in the mouth)

Nitrates are also found in recreational drugs such as amyl nitrate or nitrite "poppers." If you are not sure if any of your medicines contain nitrates, or if you do not understand what nitrates are, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

VIAGRA is only for patients with erectile dysfunction. VIAGRA is not for newborns, children, or women. Do not let anyone else take your VIAGRA. VIAGRA must be used only under a doctor's supervision.

**What VIAGRA Does Not Do**

- VIAGRA does not cure erectile dysfunction. It is a treatment for erectile dysfunction.
- VIAGRA does not protect you or your partner from getting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV (the virus that causes AIDS).
- VIAGRA is not a hormone or an aphrodisiac.

**What To Tell Your Doctor Before You Begin VIAGRA**

Only your doctor can decide if VIAGRA is right for you. VIAGRA can cause mild, temporary lowering of your blood pressure. You will need to have a thorough medical exam to diagnose your erectile dysfunction and to find out if you can safely take VIAGRA alone or with your other medicines. Your doctor should determine if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex. Be sure to tell your doctor if you:

- have ever had any heart problems (e.g., angina, chest pain, heart failure, irregular heart beats, or heart attack)

- have ever had a stroke
- have low or high blood pressure
- have a late inherited eye disease called retinitis pigmentosa
- have ever had any kidney problems
- have ever had any liver problems
- have ever had any blood problems, including sickle cell anemia or leukemia
- are allergic to sildenafil or any of the other ingredients of VIAGRA tablets
- have a deformed penis, Peyronie's disease, or ever had an erection that lasted more than 4 hours
- have stomach ulcers or any kinds of bleeding problems
- are taking any other medicines

**VIAGRA and Other Medicines**

Some medicines can change the way VIAGRA works. Tell your doctor about **any** medicines you are taking. Do not start or stop taking any medicines before checking with your doctor or pharmacist. This includes prescription and nonprescription medicines or remedies. Remember, VIAGRA should never be used with medicines that contain nitrates. See VIAGRA is Not for Everyone. If you are taking a prostate medicine, your dose may be adjusted. Please see Finding the Right Dose for You. VIAGRA should not be used with any other medical treatments that cause erections. These treatments include pills, medicines that are injected or inserted into the penis, implants, or vacuum pumps.

**Finding the Right Dose for You**

VIAGRA comes in different doses: 25 mg, 50 mg, and 100 mg. If you do not get the results you expect, talk with your doctor. You and your doctor can determine the dose that works best for you.

- Do not take more VIAGRA than your doctor prescribes.
- If you think you need a larger dose of VIAGRA, check with your doctor.
- VIAGRA should not be taken more than once a day.

If you are older than age 65 or have serious liver or kidney problems, your doctor may start you at the lowest dose, 25 mg, of VIAGRA. If you are taking prostate medications, such as for the treatment of HIV, your doctor may recommend a 25 mg dose and may limit you to a maximum single dose of 25 mg of VIAGRA in a 48-hour period.

**How To Take VIAGRA**

Take VIAGRA about one hour before you plan to have sex. Beginning in about 30 minutes and for up to 4 hours, VIAGRA can help you get an erection if you are sexually excited. If you take VIAGRA after a high-fat meal (such as a cheeseburger) and then it does not work, the medicine may take a little longer to start working. VIAGRA can help you get an erection when you are sexual or excited. You will not get an erection just by taking the pill.

**Possible Side Effects**

Like all medicines, VIAGRA can cause some side effects. These effects are usually mild to moderate and usually don't last longer than a few hours. Some of these side effects are more likely to occur with higher doses. The most common side effects of VIAGRA are headache, flushing (feeling face and upper stomach very warm), common side effects that may occur are temporary changes in color vision, such as trouble telling the difference between blue and green objects or having a blue color tinge to them; eyes being more sensitive to light or blurred vision.

In rare instances, men have reported an erection that lasts many hours. You should call a doctor immediately if you ever have an erection that lasts more than 4 hours. If not treated right away, permanent damage to your penis could occur. See How Sex Affects the Body.

Heart attack, stroke, irregular heart beats, and death have been reported rarely in men taking VIAGRA. Most, but not all, of these men had heart problems before taking this medicine. It is not possible to determine whether these events were directly related to VIAGRA.

VIAGRA may cause other side effects besides those listed on this sheet. If you want more information or develop any side effects or symptoms you are concerned about, call your doctor.

**Accidental Overdose**

In case of accidental overdose, call your doctor right away.

**Storing VIAGRA**

Keep VIAGRA out of the reach of children. Keep VIAGRA in its original container. Store at room temperature, 59°–86°F (5°–30°C).

**For More Information on VIAGRA**

VIAGRA is a prescription medicine used to treat erectile dysfunction. Only your doctor can decide if it is right for you. This sheet is only a summary. If you have any questions or want more information about VIAGRA, talk with your doctor or pharmacist; visit [www.viagra.com](http://www.viagra.com) or call 1-888-4VIAGRA.

23-5515-00-4

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U.S. Pharmaceuticals

# How many of these 20 BESTSELLERS have you missed?

**Fiction**

- THE BEAR AND THE DRAGON** by Tom Clancy
- WINTER SOLSTICE** by Rosamunde Pilcher
- THE LAST PRECINCT** by Patricia Cornwell
- ROSES ARE RED** by James Patterson
- HONG KONG** by Stephen Koontz
- WISH YOU WELL** by David Baldacci
- JOURNEY** by Dan C. Steele
- PAGAN BABIES** by Elmore Leonard
- MONSTER** by Jonathan Kellerman
- A GOD IN RUINS** by Leon Uris

**Non-Fiction**

- NOTHING LIKE IT IN THE WORLD** by Stephen Ambrose
- IN A SUNBURNED COUNTRY** by Bill Bryson
- IN THE HEART OF THE SEA** by Nathan Philbrick
- THE PERFECT STORM** by Sebastian Junger
- THE GREATEST GENERATION SPEAKS** by Tom Brokaw
- THE CASE AGAINST HILLARY CLINTON** by P. Noonan
- GALILEO'S DAUGHTER** by Dava Sobel
- RIVER HORSE** by William Least Heat-Moon
- GUNS, GERMS AND STEEL** by Jared Diamond
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# GREEN: How CRZY Is AMZN?

AMAZON IS NOT JUST A DOT-COM. IT'S SOMETHING SCARIER.

**By Ken Kurson** Like the roaring river from which the company takes its name, Amazon.com shows no mercy to those caught in its path. Competitors, investors, analysts—all have felt the power of this juggernaut, which had a high-water mark at a staggering \$40 billion in market capitalization. Amazon, the company and the stock, has been perhaps the most fascinating story the stock market's ever seen, encompassing all manner of emotions: greed, optimism, ambition, and fear—but almost no logic, restraint, or arithmetic. On December 15, 1998, the stock of the world's first big-deal online store closed at 242.75, up more than 1,000 percent in a year. That night, a little-known analyst at a second-tier bank issued what was considered a wild-eyed price target of \$400. CIBC Oppenheimer's Henry Blodget, only a couple of years removed from journalism (journalism!), looked at Amazon's \$45 million in losses on only \$154 million in sales for the previous quarter and saw something he liked. A day later, Merrill Lynch's respected BS-proof analyst Jonathan Cohen, who had already rated Amazon "near-term reduce"—analyst slang for "avoid like a turd"—said Amazon was worth only \$50 a share. You already know part of the story. When the stock shot past the 400 mark only three weeks later, Blodget became the seer of the moment. Cohen left Merrill, and Merrill hired Blodget to replace him.

So who was right? Well, the stock now trades at 36.63 (220 when adjusted for splits), so I guess they both were, even though Cohen was closer, especially for those who paid 113 and rode it down 80 percent. About a year after Blodget's career-making call, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos was in his element. The impish former

hedge-fund analyst had the rapt attention of hundreds of reporters and just plain fans—maybe the measure of how nuts things got in late '99 is that CEOs had fans—gathered on November 9 to hear the boy king make an announcement. Wearing a grin and a cowboy-style hard hat, he announced that Amazon, which had already trotted out movies, music, auctions, "zShops," and toys, would be adding home improvement stuff, software, and video games. The reporters breathlessly rushed to the phone bank to tell their editors about this important news—an outrageous overreaction to a company that had yet to earn its first nickel. At the tightly orchestrated Q&A, a lone reporter from TheStreet.com dared to raise the profit question, gently inquiring when shareholders might expect dollars going in to outnumber those rapidly flowing out. Not only did Bezos refuse to answer, he looked genuinely hurt, betrayed that any philistine wouldn't share his conviction that Amazon was destined to sell everything to everyone.

On March 10, 2000, the Nasdaq hit its all-time high: 5,132. And then the bottom dropped out. But it wasn't just the Nasdaq that was unraveling; it was Amazon. President and COO Joseph Galli, considered the straw that kept Bezos's drink actually stirring, left to head VerticalNet. Then Blodget, Amazon's most devoted cheerleader, cut his short-term rating from "buy" to "accumulate." Yahoo dropped its association with Amazon and now defaults to BarnesandNoble.com whenever it recommends a related book. Most humbling after all that manic expansion, Amazon had to hand off the inventory end of its toy business to none other than Toys "R" Us, the epitome

of old-economy retailers. And by mid-summer, analysts following Amazon went from fourteen strong buys, twelve buys, and five holds to six strong buys, seventeen buys, and eleven holds. (One brave truth teller actually calls it a "strong sell.") Funny how analysts like companies at 60 and hate 'em at 30.

The lunatic valuations of Internet companies have been analogized to death. No one's still awed that Amazon's peak market cap eclipsed that of Kmart, Sears, and Barnes & Noble combined, despite the fact that its sales are a fraction of any of those and it's never earned a cent. But just for perspective, consider the following:

Wal-Mart is probably the best run retailer in the country, and investors have rewarded the company by paying \$33.12 for a dollar of WMT earnings. But in the New Economy, profits don't count, right? So even if I bought that nonsense, just using the New Econ yardstick—price to revenue—it doesn't look so good for AMZN. Wal-Mart had sales of \$47 billion in its last quarter—just over ten bucks of revenue for every share. So with the stock at 45.38 on October 31, you were paying \$4.31 for a buck of revenue. In Amazon's most recent quarter, it had revs of \$638 million. On 356 million shares, that's \$1.79 for every share. Even at AMZN's drastically reduced recent price of \$36.63, a dollar of profitless revenue costs a whopping \$20.

Then again, there are a lot of other arms on an octopus like Amazon. For one, it's set to take in more than \$2.7 billion in annual sales, with a billion of that expected in the all-important Xmas Q4; that's huge for an online company. And Amazon is one of the very few Internet companies with any real as [continued on page 130]

# The Playbook

Initial Investment: \$35,412 Last Month's Cash Balance: \$13,978 Cash from This Month's Sales: \$24,611 Total Value: \$38,589 Total % Gain/Loss: +9.0

As described last month, my bearish turn has led to a selling spree, which culminated this month in the liquidation of the positions I didn't sell last month. On October 26, I got \$2.50 for 48 Inktomi (-\$1,262.40), 95.7% for 20 Fidelity Select Biotech (+\$170), and 132.29 for 20 Vanguard Health Care (+\$342.40). The next day, I got 0.69 for 800 ePhone (-\$496), 34.75 for 100 Disney (-\$358), 39 for 188 Nike (+\$650), 26.88 for 50 Financial Select SPDR (+\$199), 143 for 10 VeriSign (-\$368), \$1.50 for 40 Electronic Arts (+\$25.29), and 13.13 for three Alkermat November 60 puts (+\$1,809).

What leaves me with a cash balance of \$38,589 and a +9.0 percent return from January 12 to date, compared to -4.1 percent for the S&P 500 through the same period. These final transactions mark the end of the model portfolio I managed in this space. As we go forward, I'm going to be looking at a different company each month. I won't be trading the company's stock, but I will be giving it an analyst-style rating—from strong buy to strong sell. I'll follow these all year and make upgrades or downgrades as needed.

| Company    | Ticker | Rating | Price When Reviewed | Price Target | Price 10/31 |
|------------|--------|--------|---------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Amazon.com | AMZN   | 3.5    | 35                  | 20           | 36.63       |

**KEY TO RATINGS:** 1=Must Buy; 2=Like, don't love; 3=Either neutral or strongly ambiguous; 4=Avoid; 5=Imminent doom—consider a short sale. Remember: My analysis of any individual security is for informational purposes only and should be used as a starting point for your own research. Reach me at [ken@greenmagazine.com](mailto:ken@greenmagazine.com).





# The Little Emperor

It isn't easy being the most reviled man in college sports. But Steve Spurrier, head coach at Florida, works hard at it.

By Charles P. Pierce

the game

**B**ECU SMOKE  
rings low over a hundred striped tents.  
Game Day along University Avenue in  
Gainesville—what Jenkins once  
called “Saturday’s America”—an occasion on which neither

the meek inherit the earth, nor the poor in spirit the kingdom of heaven. At least not when the Roman Catholics of St. Augustine’s Church are hosting on their front lawn such an energetic affront to the part of the gospels in which the Founder is displeased to find Himself surrounded by a Palestinian proto-strip ma.

Here, on His front lawn, is a merry array of Gator ball caps and Gator T-shirts, Gator necklaces and Gator earrings, Gator seat cushions, Gator cup holders and little wooden Gators dressed as Santa Claus, and there’s little doubt that if the Founder walked in on all of it right about now, right about three hours before the Florida Gators take on the Auburn Tigers, right about six hours before Steve Spurrier wins his 108th game in eleven years at this place, there would be hell to pay, and who knows what He’d do with the big banner that hangs above the schedule of Sunday masses, the banner that announces to the world the Good News. HEY, YOU COULD WIN THIS HARLEY-DAVIDSON FAT BOY.

Of course, there are other people who will tell you that if the Founder did show up, and even if He did pitch a fit at the notion of someone raffling a motorcycle on His front lawn, Steve Spurrier would finally agree that someone had shown up with whom he could talk a little football. Steve Superior, old Shug Jordan called him when Spurrier was merely a player. His ego—sharpened and honed and shiny—is college football’s pure id.

It takes a stalwart man to become known as imperious among emperors and as an arrogant egomaniac among a host of arrogant egomaniacs in an industry based on the sweat of minimally compensated adolescents, an industry that makes bejeweled satrapies out of sleepy little towns like Gainesville and Ann Arbor, Lincoln and Norman, and yes, Tallahassee and Miami, too. They’re



Prometheus

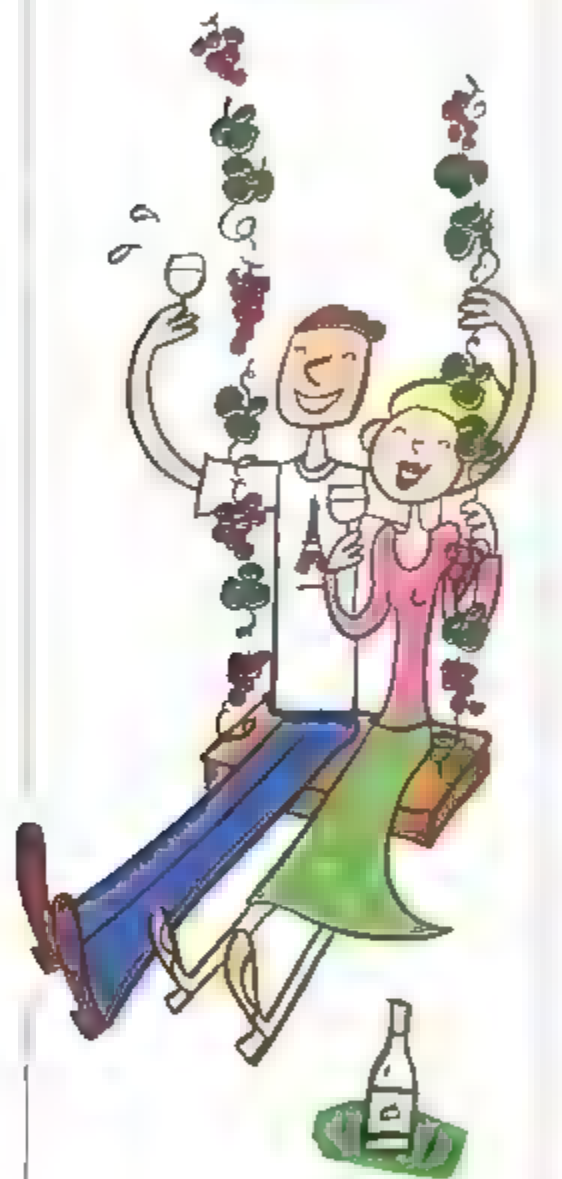


# SWINGING THINGS HAPPEN

IN THE

"Oui"

HOURS



SAY "yes" TO



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## the game

more alike than the are different and at \$7 million a year, Steve Spurrier is just like all of the emperors only more so. Ever more so.

They talk about the Visor, that stupid trademark Visor that he passes around every time a Florida quarterback screws up the grand design of Spurrier's offense because he has made the capital mistake of *not being Spurrier*. They talk about the free beneath it. It's a checked-and-unchecked as though the rest of the world offends him with its *don't*. They talk about his vaingloriousness and so farmed that a fellow coach once suggested they meet in a dark room to talk things over. They talk about how poor Mack Brown could do it with a team game while at North Carolina and Spurrier came in with Duke and beat him and then had his team pose under the scoreboard in Brown's own stadium reasoning later that "I've won more games [here] than he has."

"There are some people that I like to compete against," says ABC analyst and former Auburn coach Terry Bowden. "Staves not one of them." The Bowden franchise history with Spurrier is conspicuously cluttered. Bowden's former Bowden is Spurrier's wincular heteroreath Florida State in 1995 while Terry Bowden was a 34-year-old Spurrier had mouthed the Tigers schedule and then went up there and dropped forty-nine points on them. But it was after that season, in the Fiesta Bowl, against Nebraska in the game for the national championship when the nation got a good look at a classic Spurrier moment.

It was clear in a game that would end in a 62-24 against Spurrier and Florida. The visitors were backed up against their own goal line. Spurrier stubbornly insisted on passing. He was at it against a Nebraska defense heavily saddled that season with felonious maimings. On the first play, with virtually nobody available to block, Florida quarterback Danny Wuerffel was nearly decapitated in the end zone. On the next play, he was verran and trapped for a safety.

Upon his arrival at the sidelines, Wuerffel walked into a force's Spurrier game. The Visor flew. The free of events of it. The voice went up and down the seat like a NORAD alarm and the only thing Wuerffel had done wrong was forget to take the field padding heat. It was a painfully loud moment and you wished with all your heart that Wuerffel and just minded Spurrier his helmet suggesting that if the coach thought it was so easy, he should just go out there himself.

Except that Spurrier might have tried it. Of course the very next season, Wuerffel won the Heisman Trophy, Spurrier won coach of the year, and Florida won the na-

tional championship, beating Florida State to do it. Of course, Spurrier enlivened the whole business by taking note of a scandal involving a famously illicit shopping spree taken by Seminole players at a Foot Locker outlet, referring to his brother institution as "Free Shoes University."

There's no question about his talent as a coach, and if you harbor any doubts, feel free to ask him. Before coming to Florida, Spurrier even won at Duke, which hasn't won since he left. At Florida, Spurrier won a hundred games faster than any other major college coach anywhere. He is the architect of an occasionally dazzling form of airborne offense that annually tempts at least one NFL team to look longingly his way. None of the offers, though, have been good enough to spring him from the wealth and security of Florida. Better that he stays where he is deep in the empire. If the young and easily bulled that he's built along University Avenue.

He has great friends here, and a number of them are in the media, despite the fact that Spurrier greets the press with a menso imperat that he seems to be channeling one of the less self-effacing Plantagenets. They say he is just a plainspoken preacher's kid who says things that all the emperors really believe but don't say, that he's more like the other emperors than is comfortable for them in all their Game Day empires, where sweet smoke hangs low over the striped tents in the autumn sun where motorcycle es are peddled on sacred ground.

But that's only half the truth. Not all empires are the same. Not all emperors are alike. They don't all walk through the heart of their empires on Game Day having to know that, somewhere in a dormitory room at some other great institution of higher learning, a student, perhaps a brilliant engineering prodigy, sits under his Homer Simpson desk lamp with his face painted anything except orange and blue, and he logs on to a Web site dedicated to one particular emperor and one particular empire. The Web site is called Steve Spurrier Licks My Ass.

Alex Cresser

EMPERORS DON'T DO a lot of media. Spurrier does no one-on-ones during the season and the media get him only on Tuesdays. This Tuesday we are in the stadium seminar room and the topic is the upcoming Auburn game, of course, and the emergence of a freshman from Indiana named Rex Grossman as the latest starting Florida quarterback.

Oh, don't be his quarterback. If you want love. When Spurrier looks out from under the Visor, you know what he expects to see

Spurrier Crew cut again, fewer lines on his face, throwing perfect touchdowns in a perfect way on a perfect day. And why is it thirty years later, and why did you throw that ball, and are you trying to lose the game all by yourself? Wuerffel, dadgummit. Spurrier would've made those Nebraska guys pay. And Spurrier has given you an offense wherein you can be Spurrier, and you're not up to the role. What in the heck are you doing on the ground, boy? Visor flies. Get me another quarterback. That guy there. Put him in. Find me a Spurrier dadgummit.

And so it rewinds—the game film of Dorian Gray.

Spurrier has been known to change quarterbacks within a game, within a quarter within a single possession. If he could find a way to do it midplay, he would. This season, the opening-day starter was a senior named Jesse Palmer, who'd himself survived a bruising competition for the job in 1999. Palmer got hurt, however, and was supplanted by Grossman, who turned in a pivotal game against LSU. On most teams, the starting quarterback doesn't lose his job to

injury. Florida is not most teams. Playing quarterback for Spurrier is very much like being prime minister of Italy, used to be. Even healthy again, Palmer realizes that he's a backup for his foreseeable future.

"Things around here can change in a play," Palmer explains. "When there are a couple of quarterbacks, Coach wants to play more guys."

For his part, Grossman seems unfazed. "I have learned that you can't take what he says too personally," he says.

Spurrier arrives later and he stands at a podium at the front of the class. He's talking about Grossman, suddenly a campus celebrity, but not a Spurrier, certainly. There is only one Spurrier. "As coaches," he says, "part of our job is trying to alert our players and, hopefully, to teach them how to handle all the attention and everybody telling them how great they are. All of a sudden, they're new celebrities around here, and you never know how they'll handle instant celebrity status. You don't want to praise them too much until they do it week after week and year after year. When they finish up here, we can talk about how great they are."

"You know," he concludes, "you've got to learn to handle success as well as you han-

dle adversity." He says this with the straightest of faces, as though it's a lesson he's taken the time to learn. And then he smiles, or something very much like it.

THERE ARE FOUR HUNDRED pages in this year's Florida football media guide. A great number of them are dedicated to the accomplishments of Florida football over the past decade, which happens to coincide with the arrival of Coach Spurrier. Oh, there are a requisite fifty pages on the history of the program, but those are buried deep, and they are conspicuously outweighed by the celebratory tone of the newer material. It is almost as though there weren't any football here before him, as though there were no Jack Youngblood and no Wes Chandler, no John Reaves or Carlos Alvarez. Indeed it is almost as though there were no young Steve Spurrier, come to town in 1964 to become a star here for the first time.

He was a preacher's kid, child of the tough, unyielding Presbyterian gospel of his father. Graham Spurrier moved his family all over the South, finally ending up in Tennessee, whence Spurrier left to play quarterback at Florida. There, he was good enough to win the Heis-

## The Index

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**1** biased, but on this you have our word: Sports Guy, the collected musings of our very own sports guy, Charles P. Pierce, is well worth the \$15 Da Capo Press is asking for it. Hell, at that price, it's a steal. Fifteen bucks to wind through 30 pieces—on subjects ranging from Cool Papa Bell to

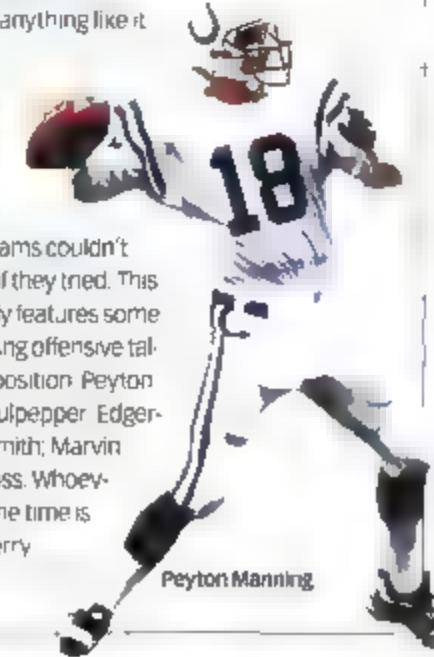
Yes, we're biased, but on this you have our word: Sports Guy, the collected musings of our very own sports guy, Charles P. Pierce, is well worth the \$15 Da Capo Press is asking for it. Hell, at that price, it's a steal. Fifteen bucks to wind through 30 pieces—on subjects ranging from Cool Papa Bell to Larry Bird to the Hooters Golf Tour—many of which appeared right here. Esquire others in that famed do-do bird of American sports journalism, The National. If you like sports—or even if you have no interest in sports but just love great writing—get this book, open it to any page and start reading. Because (shhhhhhh) Pierce does not really write about sports. He writes about America and its insatiable appetites. He writes about the Edmund Pettis Bridge and Bob Marley and high school football in Berwick, Pennsylvania, and Tiger Woods, too. We think he does this better than any one else—and we ought to know.



**2** Madden NFL 2001 for PlayStation 2 (\$50) is hands down the best football game out there. You've got Madden himself, hundreds of NFL players past and present and every All-Madden team since 1984. But what it really blows you away is the look of it. The graphics are so advanced, you can almost confuse this game with a televised one—even the equipment is player specific. You can also see the players' expressions change and hear their grunts, groans, and shouts. Plus, the increased speed of P2 makes moves more fluid and lifelike than ever. We've never seen anything like it.

**3** The ouster of Bobby Knight and the flight of Larry Bird have thrown Indiana into a bit of an identity crisis. With Isaiah Thomas at the helm and a slew of pubescent talent on the bench, can the Pacers bring pride back to the Hoosier State? Find out December 30 as they take on the San Antonio Spurs at Conseco Field House. If Reggie Miller and Austin Croshere can make nice with the resurgent Jaier Rose, they've got as good a shot as anyone at punching holes in the Spurs' towering twosome. Tim Duncan and David Robinson. The festivities begin at 7:30 P.M. ET on NBC.

**4** Minnesota and Indianapolis? These two teams couldn't stop moving the sticks if they tried. This week 17 matchup in Indy features some of the league's best young offensive talent. Take it position by position: Peyton Manning and Daunte Culpepper. Edger-n James and Robert Smith; Marvin Harrison and Randy Moss. Whoever scores last wins. Game time is 4:00 P.M. ET on—cue Terry Bradshaw—Fox.





# the game

man Trophy in 1966, edging out Bob Griese of Purdue and clinching the coveted award by kicking a forty-yard field goal to beat Auburn. It is important to note that Spurrier was not the regular Florida placekicker. Brimming with righteous confidence, he convinced coach Ray Graves to let him try the kick.

Even then, Spurrier regularly sailed over whatever artificial line it is that separates profound self-confidence from public insufferability. It was then coach Shug Jordan at Auburn who first hung "Steve Superior" on him while Spurrier was still a player. When he moved on to the NFL and he got his head handed to him on a regular basis and he achieved the distinction of quarterbacking the only 0-4 team in NFL history, more than a few people around the Southeastern Conference raised a glass.

When his professional career ended in 1978, he returned to Florida as quarterback coach. He lasted only one season because he had no interest in being the monomaniacal film-room grind head coach Charley Pell wanted him to be. Pell saw this insouciance as another manifestation of Spurrier's intolerable self-regard and he cut him loose.

He bounced around over the next decade, stopping briefly as an assistant at Georgia

Tech and at Duke and even coaching the Tampa Bay Bandits for three seasons in the departed United States Football League. It was when Spurrier returned to Duke that he began to create fully his public persona, bringing life (however briefly) to one of college football's most conspicuous petrified forests while simultaneously alienating almost everyone else.

He punished people for slights, real and imagined. He ran up scores, and he chuckled openly about it. He turned Duke into the ACC's bully, and then he pretty much did the same thing at Florida with better players and for higher stakes. When he took over, the Gators were reeling from myriad scandals that took place under the regime of Galen Hall. Spurrier straightened things out to his credit; the NCAA never has come calling on his Gators, and then he set about building a reputation as someone who coached like a man settling scores. He took it far less well than he dished it out, but he won enough to dish it out in adult doses.

Spurrier needled his fellow coaches about their candy-ass schedules (Terry Bowden at Auburn), painful past losses (Johnny Majors at Tennessee), what cars their players were driving (Bobby Bowden at Florida

State), and, generally, about *not being Spurrier*. He gloried in the Gators' traditional rivalry with Georgia, driving then-coach Ray Goff to distraction. "Poor Ray Goff," Terry Bowden recalls. "Steve'd beat Ray real bad, and then he'd talk about all the great players Ray had, which, of course, made Ray's job even tougher." Eventually, it was Goff who talked about wanting thirty minutes in an alley with Spurrier but who lost his job instead.

THE EMPEROR CASTS long shadows, and they reach across the street from Ben Hill Griffin Stadium into the O'Donnell Center, where the Florida men's basketball team is meeting the media for the first time since last year's Final Four. Florida is coached by Billy Donovan, a young Rick Pitino acolyte, from the sparkle on his shoes to the shine on his hair.

He could not be more different from Spurrier. He's a diplomat the way Pitino is, the way that Spurrier doesn't have to be, and wouldn't be, anyway. After all, there is a margin of error for football here, rooted in all those Saturdays that stretch back well before Billy Donovan was born. It's been four years since Spurrier won an SEC championship, but the notion that he might have lost his edge has yet to rise above a whisper. "Why is football different?" says one Gator forward. "Eighty-five thousand seats every Saturday, that's why."

Spurrier is insulated by history and custom. Donovan does not have those luxuries. He knows there's room for only one emperor here, and no basketball coaches need apply.

"Do we hang out all the time?" he says. "No. I mean, we're different in that I grew up in New York and Steve's from Tennessee. He's a guy who has tremendous confidence in his ability, and the one thing you have to respect about the guy is that he says what's on his mind. He doesn't sugarcoat anything."

"The one thing that people always ask me is to compare Steve with Coach Pitino. I mean, they're both competitive, and they both want to win, but, I mean, Coach Pitino's in the office at 5:30 A.M., and that's not Steve. Steve says, 'Staying in the office until midnight? To do what?'"

Even at Kentucky, where the relative importance of football and basketball forever will be the reverse of what they are at Florida, Pitino never was an emperor. For all his outward smoothness, there's always a sense to Pitino that he worries that there's something he hasn't done to prepare his team. For Spurrier, the plan is never wrong—Throw the dadgum ball, Wuerffel. Are you trying to lose this for me all by yourself? It only fails because there is no Spurrier on whom Spurrier can call. Plus, [continued on page 130]

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# The Great Leap Forward

By Tom Carson



Ang Lee's new martial-arts thriller, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, is a movie that makes us believe again in the magic of movies

FROM ITS FABULOUS TITLE to its capping image of a woman hurtling through clouds, Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is a martial-arts epic the way *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a sex farce and *Swan Lake* is a hunting anecdote. Set in a China that never was but filmed, to ravishing effect, in the real one—the story takes the stock types and fanciful situations of pulp romance, from a hero guarding for a final showdown to a princess secretly in love with a dashing thief, and presents them with such acuteness and depth of feeling that what happens to everyone is cathartic. Since the characters also communicate mostly in fights staged by *Matrix* choreographer Yuen Wo Ping, *Crouching Tiger* is a swirling display of acrobatic action as well as a fairy tale informed by grown-up wisdom.

At least on the ethereal surface, this long-mulled dream project is also un-

like anything that Lee—the Taiwanese director best known for the Jane Austen adaptation *Sense and Sensibility*, as well as for *The Ice Storm*, a movie whose only magic trick was turning hankies into wet blankets—has done before. Yet it crystallizes his almost Renoir-like gift for humane understanding even as he shows off skills in stylized visual poetry you'd never think he had. Lee grew up doing on wuxia pan—the films of "martial chivalry," the swordplay-driven period romances that once ruled Hong Kong action fantasy. That's the tradition *Crouching Tiger* seeks to apotheosize, especially in its pivotal figure, the wuxia warrior Li Mu Bai. He's played, iconically, by Chow Yun Fat, the stalwart veteran of countless screen ordeals at the hands of John Woo and others, even if Chow didn't really start suffering until he costarred with Jodie Foster in *Anna and the King*.

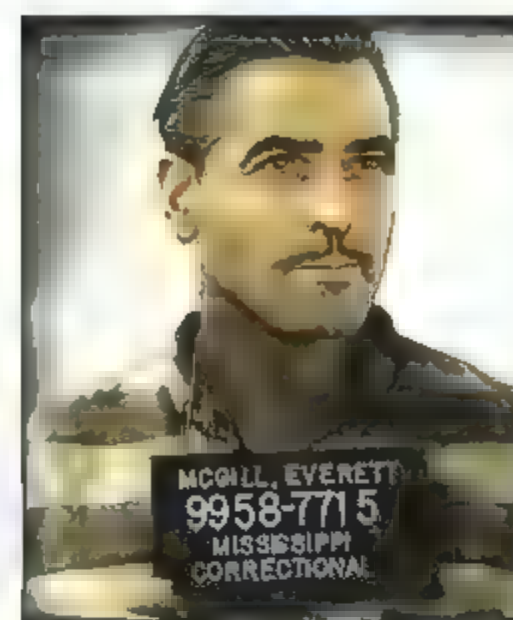
Befitting a movie whose fight scenes elevate body language to body opera, Li lets you know who he is by how he carries himself. Wearing an expression whose composure turns the knightly equivalent of "Been there, done that" from a boast into a source of melancholy, he's so commanding that you take his valiant past on faith during *Crouching Tiger*'s quiet opening, when he tells his oldest comrade-in-arms, Shu Lien (Michelle Yeoh), that he's decided to retreat into a more contemplative life. As the movie's spiritual scheme would have it, Li isn't just world-weary but material-world-weary, and he's got only one regret: For all his great deeds, he's never avenged his dead master, murdered by the notorious she-devil Jade Fox.

You know his retirement doesn't have much of a future, but it's crucial to the larger theme that Li doesn't entirely dominate the subsequent action. Considering not only his stature but also that he's played by half the planet's favorite action star, the way the movie keeps him off-screen for long stretches is almost an act of effrontery. Yet part of what makes *Crouching Tiger* sublime is how effortlessly the structure expands from a single-

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## the screen

munded tale of retribution into a dazzle of contrapuntal fireworks involving four or five major characters so skillfully handled that not until the final scene does it sink in whose story this has been all along.

Li ceremonializes his decision by giving up his sword, a talismanic weapon named the Green Destiny, which he entrusts to Shu Lien to take to a mutual friend in Beijing. There, she meets Jen (Zhang Ziyi), who's everything Natalie Portman was supposed to be in *The Phantom Menace*, the pampered daughter of a provincial governor, whose upcoming marriage hasn't quelled her craving for the adventurous wuxia life. That night, the Green Destiny is stolen—by a masked intruder whose identity won't be news to anybody who's seen a movie before.

When Shu Lien, among others, goes after the thief, Lee unleashes the sequence that turns *Crouching Tiger* magical. In a sudden, fluid shift in tone, we're watching an uncannily hushed chase through a deserted palace courtyard, with pursuer and quarry scampering up walls to hurl themselves at each other before the thief soars to a rooftop to make good her escape. After the slow buildup, this eerie clash by night is such a delicious surprise that the audience at the

screening I attended burst into applause. But the director is just getting started.

Once we learn about Jen's past, her craving for excitement seems like gluttony. For one thing, her husband-to-be is out of luck, some time ago, when his fiancée's caravan was waylaid by robbers; she ended up in a wild romance with the gang's dashing leader, known to his victims as Dark Cloud but to her, less dauntingly, as Lo. She's also been trained in martial arts since childhood by the woman posing as her governess—none other than Jade Fox (Cheng Pei Pei), driven into hiding by her murder of Li's master.

Soon, learning of the Green Destiny's theft, Li himself turns up—as does Jen's outlaw lover (Chang Chen). As all of them come in to contact, the story shifts from Beijing to the countryside and the Gobi Desert, that damned sword keeps changing hands, and the pattern of conflicts and allegiances that develops seems to map the unsuspected common ground between Sergio Leone's outsized pop duels and Max Ophüls's romantic roundelays. The movie is so carefully tailored to keep you aware of the plot's underlying emotional resonances that even a pair of minor characters—two constables on Jade Fox's trail—are father and daughter. The connection is

a grace-note anticipation of Li's offer to become Jen's mentor.

Although the director doesn't emphasize it, there's real grandeur in Li's calm refusal to treat Jen as an enemy. Trying to free her from Jade Fox's orbit, he and Shu Lien also help Lo in his ardent quest to win her back—which is like Abelard and Heloise advising Romeo, since by now we've learned that the older couple's feelings for each other, visible from the start, have been suppressed by their respect for Shu Lien's long-dead fiancé. Late in the movie the two of them enjoy a rare breather between crises and battles, and Li tells Shu Lien that moments like this—just sitting with her, drinking tea—are all he's ever asked of life. The speech is understated, but the imagery isn't; the center of the screen is filled with a huge swath of thriving vegetation, framed to leap out like a painting. The shot's full beauty hits home when you realize that you're seeing a green destiny—the one he'll never have.

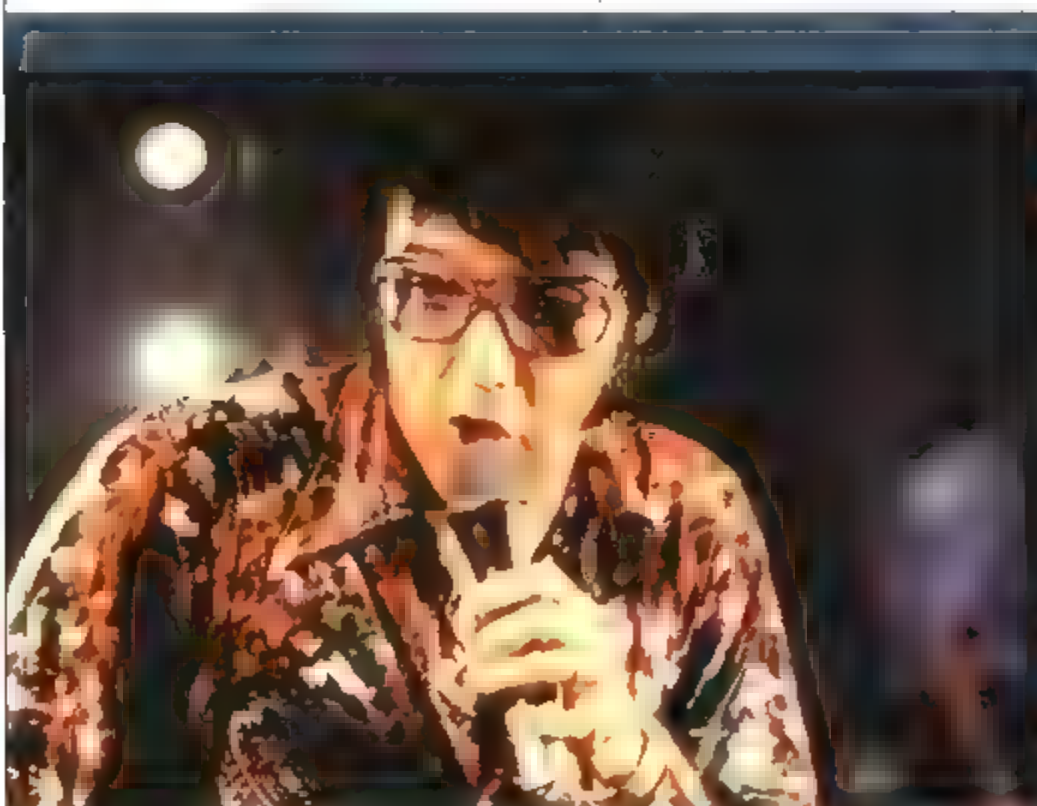
COUNTERPOINTING this middle-aged serenity, the movie's wildest, most extravagant sequence is an extended flashback to Jen's romance with Lo, a shoot-the-works ode to the

## The Index

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**2** With Shenmue, Sega has raised the bar on action games so high that Serge Bubka would have trouble clearing it. The graphics and sound effects are as good as those in any Disney movie, and the action is astoundingly intricate and interactive—to the point that your character, Ryo Hazuki, can enter an arcade and play video games. The basic idea is this: You, a young badass, must unravel the mystery of your father's murder. It's not easy, but it's fun, and there's more to it than just outmaneuvering the bad guys. For starters, there are shades of gray, in terms of characters and their motives, that make you feel a little smart and wily while you're playing. In addition, there are games within games. You have to solve problems, fight multiple characters with different skills, race cars, and play darts. The challenges go on and on. Available now, \$50.

**3** The hands-down coolest flick screened at this fall's Toronto International Film Festival was Japanese music-video director Takeuchi Tetsuro's *Wild Zero*. It's the ultimate rock movie—the combination of *Help!*, *Quadrophenia*, and *Night of the Living Dead* you've always dreamed of—starring (and this is where it's gonna start sounding weird) Japan's answer to the Ramones, Guitar Wolf. With no sense of melody but attitude to burn, the band's eponymous leader and his sidemen teach their No. 1 fan, Ace, important life lessons about looking good, feeling good, and battling flesh-eating ghoulies. It's a demented, cheesy plot that also features babelicious arms dealers, zombies in love, a flying-saucer invasion, and gunplay galore. If no U.S. distributor picks up *Wild Zero*, stateside punk fans ought to riot and break things until they change their minds.



**1** In case you didn't know, January is the month Elvis was born, an occasion that Turner Classic Movies is celebrating by rolling out scads of classic Presley programming, including a 19-film festival and interviews with former band members and friends. The highlight, though, is *Elvis: That's the Way It Is*. Here's the King at his bejeweled best, in 1970, scowling and shimmying his way across the Vegas stage with abandon. You'll see a different—even goofy—side to Elvis as he jokes with the audience and even does a little yodeling. The concert footage features ten never-before-broadcast numbers, as well as several memorable offstage moments. So tune in January 15 at 8:00 P.M. ET for a taste of vintage Vegas—and don't forget the peanut butter and bacon.



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Ever heard of  
John Banville?  
By Sven Birkerts

# The Last Undiscovered Genius



REMAIN BOGGLED BY THE VAGARIES of the literary marketplace—how it is that some careers inexplicably take off while others, possibly even more likely, still await the detonating spark. I would have pegged Irish novelist John Banville for major stardom, if not the Nobel short list, years ago. Though only in his mid-fifties, Banville has produced a shelfful of brilliant novels, and almost any of his recent efforts are strong enough to have broken him out. It could have been *The Book of Evidence* (1989), his all-edges-

gleaming portrayal of a man in extremis. It certainly should have been *The Untouchable* (1997), the extraordinary roman à clef of high culture espionage in pre- and postwar Britain. But praise them as the critics will. Banville's born-again baptism as a world-class author is still pending.

Will the February publication of *Eclipse*, his twelfth novel, change things? The career is poised, the author is at the top of his form. The only question is how ready readers are for such full-tilt interiority: seizing a life by its nerve endings. Banville takes us ghosting. Things rustle and creak, the cellar door swings open on guilt, remorse, and self-betrayal.

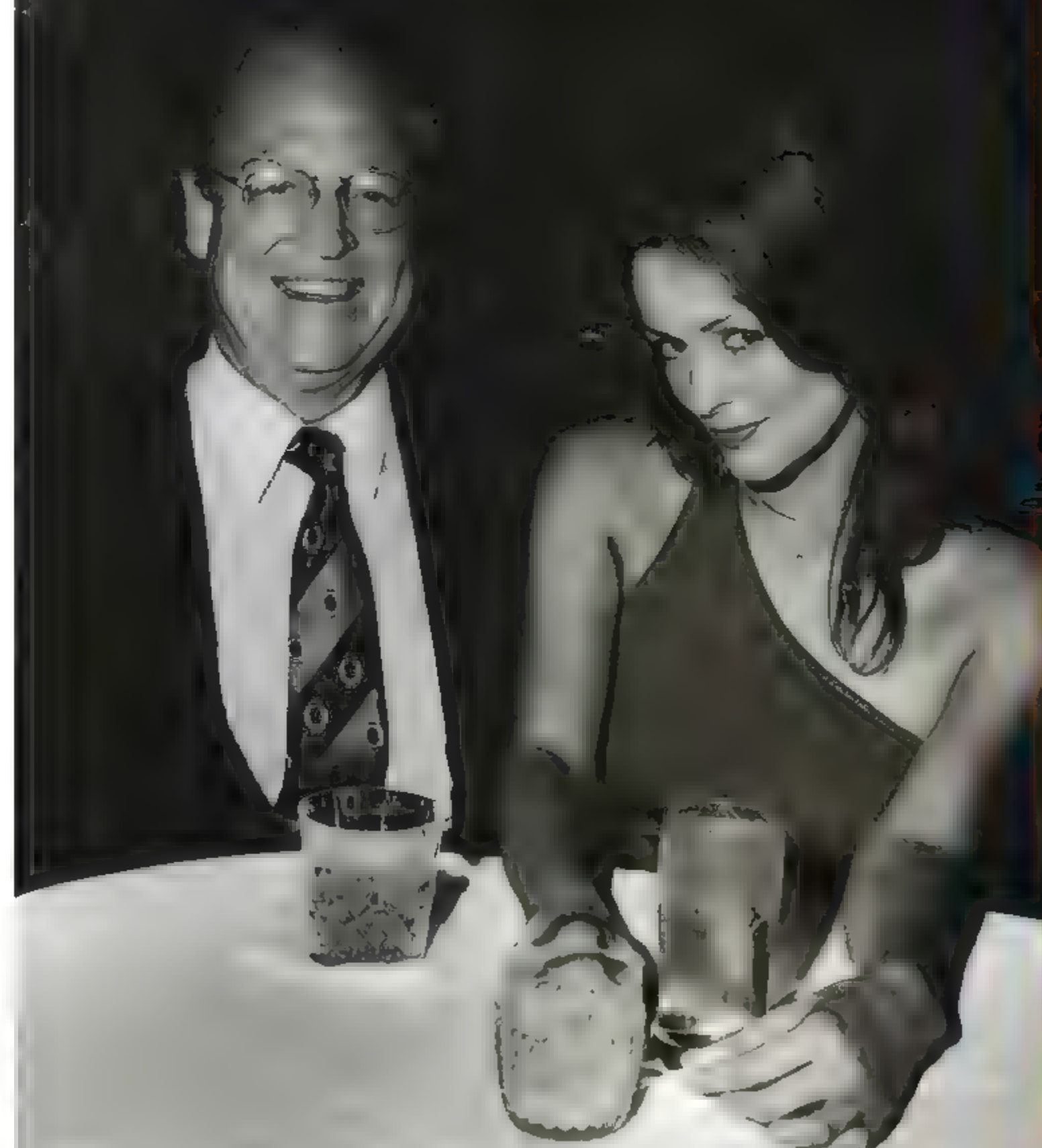
The style is magnetic. I was in from the very first paragraph: "It was as if someone had fallen silently into step beside me or inside me, rather." And "see me there, the haunted one, in my fiftieth year, assailed suddenly, in the midst of the world."

I should confess, I'm not the most objective party here. I myself am technically in my fiftieth year, and if there is a theme for this period of my life, it is of being stalked, surprised at every turn by private specters—from old lovers to ungainly former selves. Banville has nailed that feeling, and the air is still ringing from the hammer blows. *Eclipse* may be spare in its depiction of surface events, but it captures in its pages a felt life so dense, so swift in its paranoid momentum, that the whole idea of the novel, as a window to the self, seems viable again.

Alexander Cleave is a successful stage actor who has suddenly "corpsed"—gone immobile midperformance. He feels his life plug yanked from its socket, and it can only be a sign. "I have lived among surfaces too long," he admits, "skated too well upon them." Suddenly crushed up against meaninglessness, he leaves behind all responsibilities—to his wife Lydia and their troubled daughter Cass—and returns to the town of his youth. There, in the ramshackle house he grew up in, where his father long ago killed himself and his mother faded, he puts himself in the way of his fate. Wandering, brooding, letting his memories rise up around him, Alex tries to catch himself, as he puts it, "red-handed."

One could just say "midlife crisis" and be done with it. And, indeed, in the hands of a lesser writer, this bid for existential self-repossession could prove deadily. How to give such a very nothing a propulsion and a purpose? But Banville is an

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## the page

old hand at weaving suspense from the filaments of darkness. Straightaway—the hint is there in the opening passage—he fills Alex's life with prickly foreboding, a sense of gathering menace.

We are dealing with nothing so simple as old-style ghosts, however. No, Alex must work his way through a full spectrum of visitations—from childhood memories so vivid that they feel like hallucinations, to thumps and corner-of-the-eye movements that eventually resolve into the reassuringly material shapes of his caretaker, Quirke, and Quirke's fifteen-year-old daughter Lily (they have been secretly squatting in one part of the old house) to several real ectoplasmic encounters.

These last are presented without much dramatic inflection, as if to say that no mere visit from the other side could make much of an impact on Alex's pitch of anxious confusion. Talking on the phone with Lydia, chancing to glance toward the kitchen, he sees "the figure of a woman—tall, young, turning from the range abruptly handing something, it looked like, to what seemed like a seated child." When he approaches a moment later, of course, the room is empty. Still, he is convinced these shimmering sightings seem to be telling him a secret.

*Eclipse* may be interior, but it is not slow moving. As the novel progresses, Banville gathers his atmospheres of intimation into an escalating omniscience. Alex begins to find himself stirred and vexed by Lily's resemblance to his daughter—she moves in and out of his range of vision like a sign or warning. And then, late in the book, comes news of Cass's tragedy. If Alex had felt earlier that his return to the old home had brought him "close up to the very stuff of the world," now he must actually plunge in. The wounded soul searcher, the creature of endless roles and masks, will finally pare himself down to the one true role.

From his earliest novels, Banville has shown himself to be an astonishing maker of sentences—a poet, really. Whereas most writers find their garden and cultivate it—doing marital strife or coming of age or the sorrows of postmodernism—Banville has thrown wide the doors of subject matter and kept open his options of stylistic attack. In historical imaginings like *Kepler* (1981) and *Dr. Copernicus* (1976), he animated the bygone world down to the twitching flank of the innkeeper's horse.

He has not lost the touch. Alex's childhood memories have "the station lamps aglow

in the misty darkness like the furry heads of dandelions, and the looming black steam engine gasping where it stood, and the licorice smell of smoke and cinders."

But it is Banville's way with the other end of the spectrum, where the intangibles live that gives his work its real distinctiveness. He has the gift, very rare, of psychological intimacy, of getting in as close to the nuances of inner states as language will allow. "So I re-

mained for a long moment," reports Alex after another jolt from the past, "not thinking, exactly, but touching the thought of thought, as one would touch the tender, buzzing edges of a wound." That catches something in me. Reading such passages, following the voice—the flicker of its nervous needle, I feel lived in, known, another man's ghosts becoming, most eerily, my own. The page-turning pleasure changes as the shadows move in, but I stay with it, I push on because I know that this is as true as things ever get. At least in midlife. **B**

## The Index

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

What a great year it was for books. Here are some of our favorites.

**1** *Dreambirds: The Strange History of the Ostrich in Fashion, Food, and Fortune*, by Rob Nixon (Picador, \$23). A wonderfully odd, gorgeously written and difficult-to-characterize memoir slash-travelogue about Nixon's native South Africa. Brought up in the desert, where farmers got rich raising ostriches for their feathers, Nixon migrated (birdlike) as an adult to the American West, which was in the midst of an ostrich gold rush of its own. (The "Ostrich—the other beef" had never took off, alas.)

beautifully produced book about, among other things, the history of philosophy, math, physics, and theology.

*Angelhead*, by Greg Bottoms (Crown, \$22). A tour-de-force memoir about Bottoms's older brother who, at the age of 16, dropped acid, saw God, then went crazy. To call Bottoms's brother a paranoid schizophrenic is to rob his illness of its beauty, though. Bottoms writes like a poet; he writes as if he's on fire.

*Driving Mr. Albert: A Trip Across America with Einstein's Brain*, by Michael Paterniti (The Dial Press, \$19). In 1955, a young pathologist in a hospital in Princeton, New Jersey, removed the brain from the newly dead Albert Einstein and kept it for himself. In 1997, Paterniti drove across country with the elderly doctor—quite the character—to return the brain to Einstein's granddaughter, Evelyn. A bighearted road-show adventure and a fantastically companionable book.

**2** *Sam the Cat and Other Stories*, by Matthew Klam (Random House, \$23). These stories are alternately brilliant and repellent—so funny your head will hurt and so depressing that you'll want to shoot yourself in said head. Klam's writing is a spiky delight, and current fiction rarely feels so real.

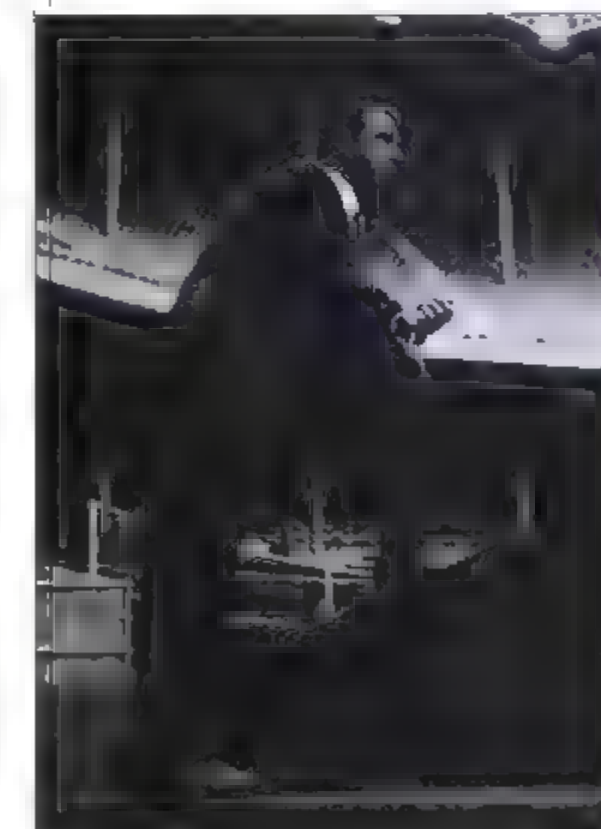
*Pastoralia*, by George Saunders (Riverhead, \$23). It's Saunders's world—we just live in it—and these are seriously funny, seriously out there, but deeply moral short stories about capitalism gone haywire.

*Anil's Ghost*, by Michael Ondaatje (Knopf, \$25). A young female forensic anthropologist returns to her native Sri Lanka to identify a charred skeleton that she believes belonged to a soldier murdered by the government. A lush, menacing novel.

*Pagan Babies*, by E. More Leonard (Delacorte, \$25). A primer on how to write a crime novel.

*Assorted Fire Events: Stories*, by David Means (Context Books, \$22). Brooding stories of remarkable range and delicacy about the difficulty—but not impossibility—of human connection.

*The Question of Bruno*, by Aleksandar Hemon (Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, \$23). A supremely original and challenging debut short story collection from a young Bosnian writer.



*Joe DiMaggio: The Hero's Life*, by Richard Ben Cramer (Simon & Schuster, \$28). Cramer succeeds at the impossible by capturing the heretofore unknown interior life of the American uberman, our very unheroic hero. A massive accomplishment written with DiMaggioan grace and brio.

*Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea*, by Charles Seife (Viking, \$25). A smart, witty, and

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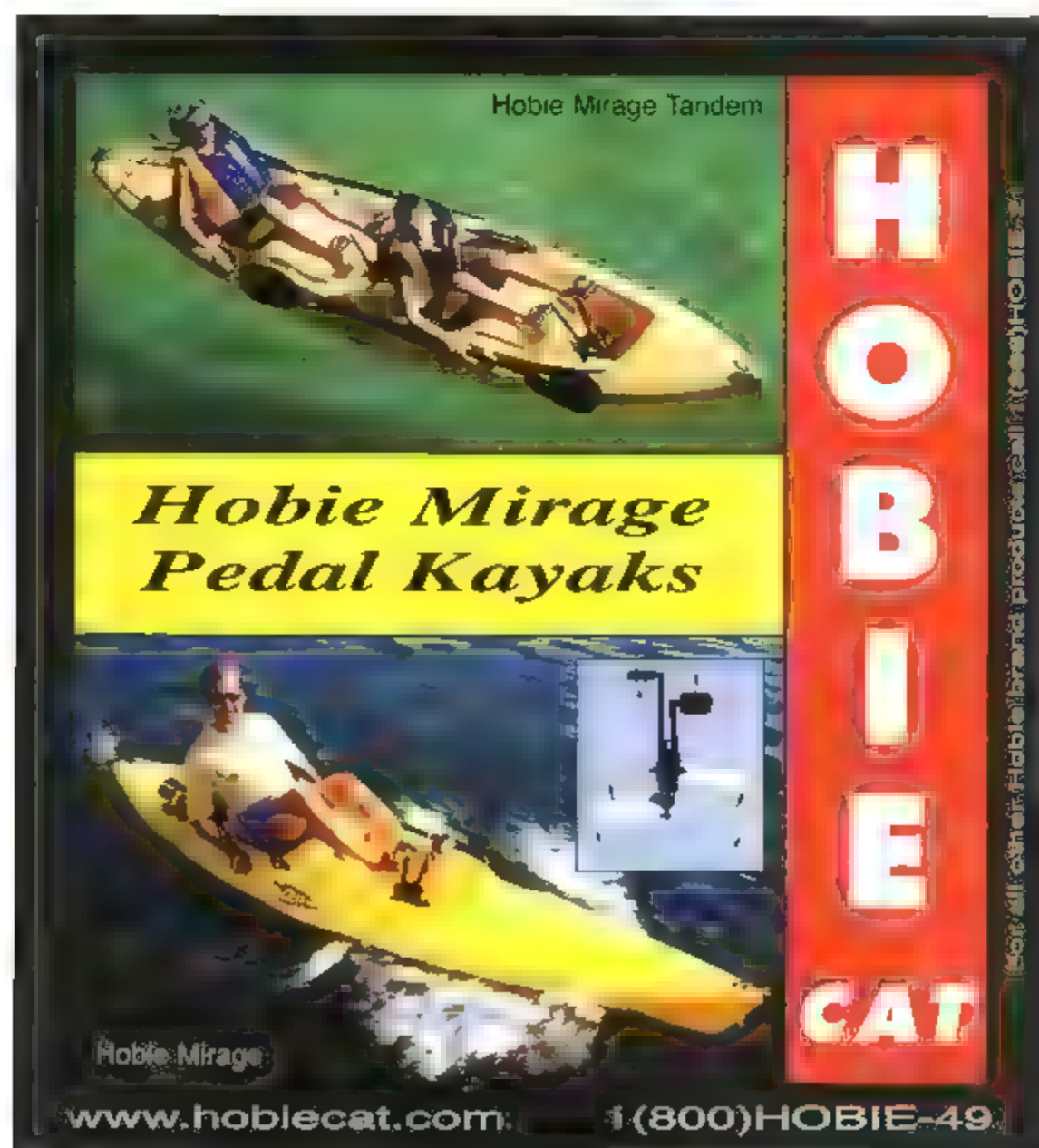
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## THE ART OF BUSINESS CASUAL SIMPLIFIED



On Tuesday, October 3, 2000, *Esquire* and CORNELIANI partnered with SAKS FIFTH AVENUE in Boston to conduct a business casual wardrobe seminar and to present an evening of private shopping for members of the Massachusetts Bar Association's New Lawyers section. The seminar and informal modeling segment was hosted by Saks Fifth Avenue's Fashion Director Dan McCampbell (pictured center) and *Esquire* Executive Editor Scott Omevanuk.

(pictured right) Showcasing items of sophistication and elegance from CORNELIANI's Fall 2000 collection, they illustrated a variety of appropriate power statements for the new corporate casual environment. If you are interested in a custom *Esquire* seminar on the art of dressing for the new office, call Associate Publisher/Marketing Renee Lewin at 212-649-4162.

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## LET'S GO

"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." Yup, ever since Adam and Eve got the eviction notice, we've been on the move. Of course, we now travel because the client needs us in San Francisco or because we need to be at Amanjena, but the questions remain the same: What to bring? And, most important, when you're packing more than a fig leaf, what to bring to protect it? For some reason, we still can't quite figure out, people are more than happy to take their precious clothing cargo and pack it into pieces of luggage that look about as old and beat up as Abe Vigoda. (No offense, Mr. V.) Perhaps an update is in order? A combination of cases and bags like these will protect not only your clothes while en route but also your reputation while checking in.

# The Esquire Guide Luggage



**1** All of the bags on this page are combinations of leather and canvas, but this one features a flat bottom, which is ideal for packing things like shirts that don't resist wrinkling too well. Leather and canvas bag, \$990, by Prada.

**2** This top-loading duffel is reminiscent of the OD version dad took with him to boot camp. It's deceptively cavernous, but its higher dose of style ensures you won't find it at the PX. Leather and canvas bag, \$500, by Tussardi.

**3** Just because it's soft doesn't mean it has to be completely formless. Hermès uses leather in the right places so that the canvas takes the shape of a more traditional suitcase. Leather and canvas bag, \$2,540, by Hermès.

**4** Not unlike the supine suits it sells, Brioni's luggage is handcrafted in Italy with the same meticulous attention to detail and the finest materials: linen and leather duffel, \$1,200, by Brioni.





## JET SET

There's a lot of ballistic nylon out there, friends. A lot. And for the most part, it's for good reason: Nylon's not terribly expensive, it's resistant to most scrapes and skids, and it requires little to no maintenance—hence its ubiquity in departure lounges. But you're perceptive, aren't you? And you see these hard-sided leather cases arrayed above and wonder why—if nylon is as good as we say it is—would you want one of them? Maybe it's because they aren't like everything else that slides onto the luggage carousel. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that beautiful craftsmanship and luxurious materials often beat out modern convenience when the chips are down. Are they a bit heavier? Yep. Will they get banged around a bit? Kinda. But in an age when a flight on a jumbo jet can start to resemble a bus ride in Calcutta, do they help renew that sense of glamour once associated with air travel and make us excited for the journey? Absolutely.

**1** With Samsonite's more refined and elegant take on the classic trolley style case, you get all the benefits that road warriors have known about for years without (quite fortunately) looking like a road warrior. Suitcase with wheels by Samsonite.

**2** This case by Ferragamo is crafted out of the same leather that makes his shoes the envy of feet the world over. Add to the mix heavy-duty brass hardware and a canvas lining and its style is matched by its durability. Leather suitcase (\$1,050) by Salvatore Ferragamo.

**3** Newer materials have come to market, but leather is still a smart choice when it comes to luggage. That it can be rendered in a currently hip plaid makes it a smarter choice still. Plaid leather suitcase (\$3,540) by Polo Ralph Lauren Luggage.

The only monogram that should appear on luggage is your own—discreetly. That's what we like about this piece from Vuitton: its understated, unlogood luxury belies the craftsmanship that has made the brand so renowned. Leather suitcase (\$1,080) by Louis Vuitton.

**5** You'll never again confuse your luggage with someone else's with this pair of matched suitcases from Trussardi. In its ninety years, the Italian glove maker has mastered almost everything made with leather. Medium and large leather suitcases (\$1,900, \$2,025) by Trussardi.

**6** Zegna's carry-on is designed to fit under most airline seats, but since it's crafted out of the finest cowhide both inside and out and its shape evokes a timeless elegance, why would you want to keep it down there? Leather carry-on bag (\$850) by Ermenegildo Zegna.

**7** Covering this case in high-tech Kevlar (which is five times as strong as steel) ensures its durability. Combed with beautiful (if low-tech) leather accents and you'll be the envy of skycaps from De Gaulle to Kansai. Kevlar-and-leather suitcase (\$700) by Valextra.

**8** One of the key advantages hard-sided luggage has over soft. Stiff sides covered in high-quality nylon will protect your clothes better than any conformable bag. All black and all business, this case is a Fort Knox for your clothes. Nylon suitcase (\$1,410) by Prada.



**1** Lose that cheap plastic garment bag that came with your suit. This catskin number protects your clothes far better. Leather garment bag (\$1,050) by Ermenegildo Zegna.

**2** And don't cram everything into that garment bag—shampoo doesn't belong right next to that \$2,000 suit. Leather garment bag (\$825) by Polo Ralph Lauren luggage.

**3** Garment bags run the risk of getting mangled during baggage handling—all the more reason to carry them on board. Leather garment bag (\$4,100) by Hermes.

**4** A bag like this is configured to meet current overhead regulations, but it's always best to check with your airline before you travel. PVC suitcase (\$685) by Burberry.

**5** This bag is actually three cases in one: a clothing compartment, a detachable laptop case, and a folding garment bag. Nylon suitcase (\$500) by Swiss Army.

**6** Some of the vast travel expertise of the 165-year-old hunting outfitter Holland & Holland is in an easy carry-on size. Flax and leather trolley (\$1,150) by Holland & Holland.

**7** Military-style, be down scraps and heavy-duty nickel zippers make sure that whatever is packed inside this roller will stay inside. Canvas suitcase (\$1,540) by Gucci.

**8** In-line skating wheels, like the ones on this piece here, ensure a smooth roll that in no way resembles an old shopping cart. Leather trolley (\$775) by Tumi.

**9** A full-sized garment bag has been expertly concealed in this easy-to-carry and exceedingly elegant case. Leather suitcase (\$1,050) by Louis Vuitton.

## IN THE BAG

Do you remember your first set of wheels? We do. No, not the folks Country Squire you drove to school, the wheels that first appeared on the bottom of your luggage. For years we thought those flight crews were up to something, the way they rolled through terminal B without a care in the world while we did our best interpretation of Edmund Hillary's Sherpa. But then we wrapped our hands around the cool, collapsible handle of one of these, and we were off. Gone. Without a care or a trace. Or a hernia. Since air travel today is essentially a controlled evacuation, and even evacuees get a chopper to the airfield, it's not uncommon to have to run the 440 in less than forty-five seconds just to make your connecting flight. You need all the help you can get. And if formal occasions or business meetings are going to take up the bulk of your time, may we suggest a proper garment bag to accompany you? Yes, there's always pressing at the hotel, but your worsteds and cashmeres will thank you for not twisting and contorting them into ungodly shapes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE PAGE 1. PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF SPENCER. TOP PHOTO BY N. W. INFORMATION IN ENCLAVES AND STORES AVAILABLE FROM OUR

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Backdraft 0559005  
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The Mask of Zorro 2281509  
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10 Things Hate About You 2413706  
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**SPECIAL BLOWOUT  
EDITION!**

**Esquire**



**WHY IS THIS MAN LAUGHING?**

George W. Bush was elected the forty-third president of reality, a pretty large portion of the United States.

**AND IN SOME SCENARIOS, THE WINNER COULD TURN OUT TO BE MEL CARNAHAN**

On Election Day, A. Gore won more votes.

**ALONG WITH SEVERAL DOZEN COPIES OF THE SADDEST-LOOKING ASSES YOU'VE EVER SEEN**

Two missing computer drives containing nuclear-weapons secrets were found behind a copy machine at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

**OH, SHUT YOUR PIE HOLE. WE'RE TRYING TO WATCH THE GAME**

"I think our friend the bandanna-ed one might be in for a little symbolic retribution this year: a theory espoused by Dante in his master piece the *Inferno*. Now, in layman's terms, the theory is as follows: How you perform in life is how you are either rewarded or punished in the afterlife."

**YEAH, WELL, THEY STILL HAVEN'T APOLOGIZED FOR CARRYING "THE FAMILY CIRCUS"**

The *Hartford Courant*, one of the oldest newspapers in America, apologized for having carried advertising that sought the return of run-away slaves.

**MORE GOOD NEWS FOR THE GABOR SISTERS**

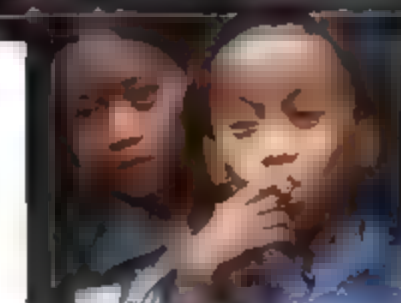
Researchers in Virginia reported that they had managed to clone pigs.

**ANOTHER EGREGIOUS EXAMPLE OF THE MEDIA TAKING AN INNOCENT QUOTE OUT OF CONTEXT**

"I want your heart. I want to eat your children."

—Mike Tyson to Lennox Lewis

DIGITAL IMAGING BY ED GABRIEL



**SO WHO'S RUNNING GOD'S NAVY?**

A hospital outside Bangkok was seized by members of a ragtag Burmese rebel group called God's Army, which is led by a pair of twelve-year-old twins, Luther and Johnny Htoo, who carry machetes, chain-smoke cheroots, and believe they are impervious to bullets.

**OH, SHUT YOUR PIE HOLE. WE'RE TRYING TO WATCH THE GAME**

Talking on Court TV about her career aspirations, Paula Jones said, "I used to do some drawing. And I thought about maybe taking some art classes. I would love to do a book deal. Maybe an exciting [one] more like a comedian-type book deal. You know, the real me, because I don't think I'm boorish at all. Do you think I'm boorish?"

**THE PREFERRED TERM IS "RAG-HEAD NATION"**

Madeleine Albright announced that the United States would no longer use the term "rogue state" when referring to "countries of concern" to the U. S. government.

THE 2000 DUBIOUS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

BY SHARON AUGSTADEN

Any other year, this might have been more difficult

**365**

**reasons to kill yourself**

1 They're breeding



2 The Miami relatives. 3 Million Marches. 4 The off chance that we actually can't all get along. 5 Juries that send messages. 6 The creeping suspicion that victims' families on the news are faking their grief. 7 24/7/365. 8 Madonna's British accent. 9 Living in a time when replacing the Big Top XXX Theater with the Nasdaq building is seen as an improvement. 10 The Nasdaq. 11 The WB. 12 "Working to make a difference. The people of Philip Morris Companies." 13 Kaczynski was right. 14 If there is a commercial video of the Columbine shooting, that means there was also an editing

session for the Columbine video and a soundtrack session for the Columbine video, and someone had to name the Columbine video, and some people stood around deciding on box-cover layouts for the Columbine video. Dubya. I don't miss someone taking hit. It's about time for a new Tarantino movie. The possibility of another Travolta comeback. "S.W.I." "Hey, whoa, sorry about 1st Holocaust thing. The Pope. Hey, whoa, sorry about that selling savior thing. The Hartford Courant. askO.com. People with even the most remote Swahili heritage conspicuously overpronouncing words that sound ever vaguely Swahili. Hispanic. Er, Latino? The war? Republican National Convention luncheon. Irresponsible manipulative George Bush Sr. and the shallow, undeserving George Bush Jr. The warm Democratic National Convention reunion of the charismatic, phony president of the United States and the dull, phony vice-president of the United States. Asked why she had dressed up as a goat to protest at the Republican National Convention, a woman said, "Well, don't know. Do any of you guys know?" "Well, said her friend, goats are famous for like eating anything. So, you see, it's a metaphor for politics." "Dirty organizations like the government pointing the finger at dirty organizations like Microsoft." "When you die and go to heaven, everyone who over lived will be walking around having cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and introducing themselves and when they say "Oh, what time period are you from?" and you say, "Early twenty first century America," everyone will laugh. God had to let us live a little longer. Neil did Jefferson. Directed by Jason Priestley. Oprah's Book Club. There's a kid in Michigan who's nineteen and will be drafted by both the NBA and Major League Baseball and who will never have to have the happy job you do or have to worry about bills or wonder whether he can afford something, the little jack.



Hitler mustaches. Kan dis. B. Kool. 4/yr/uh? 24. Dirty pants trend shows no sign of going away. And now for a quick reading from the album *Swarm of No. 1* by Bow Wow, the thirteen-year-old rapper. "And oughta snatch up yo daughter. But I was brought up with respect. When turn sixteen I'ma call for the cash. And show her how to ride with a baller, yo." Thank you. No, please you're too kind. Presidential pets. Celebrity-endorsed diseases. Hilariously dysfunctional Fox fanies. Dramatically dysfunctional WB families. Wise beyond their years TV kids. David E. Kelley. 34. Women's boxing. Handbags for men. 48. The sexiest Bachelor in America pageant.



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Break open the gin, throw back some lithium, and put on your favorite Allen Iverson album—it's that time again...


**DUBIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS**



365

seem to go on and on and then you bail  
 ze you're not even halfway through  
 I Cool apitazism All those people  
 who went homeless nine '80s are now  
 total-y uncool " The AMA's disturbing  
 report that the majority of Americans are  
 overweight " Victoria's Secret's dis-  
 turbing report that 40 percent of all sales  
 are tongs " Bacon double cheese





• In the two high school elections, only 10 percent of the students used the ballot box. A pay of \$100,000, information gathered about the aggressive campaign event on since the 60s. The

[illegible]

Figure 1 displays a series of 12 images (A-L) illustrating the progression of a color gradient. The images are arranged in two rows of six. The top row (A-F) shows a woman in a red dress, and the bottom row (G-L) shows a woman in a blue dress. The images are labeled A through L in the bottom right corner of each panel.

LOPEZ, C. M. V. THE ROCK H AVN TOM BRYON AND KOB BLACK. M. V. BRITNEY SPEARS AND CHRIS NA ACUILERA J AVN, UNKNOWN HOTTE

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GREEN CARD

GITA: GRAPHICS BY JOE ZEEB  
N.Y. STRATON & BY MADONNA



365

reasons to kill yourself

Oh, C'mon, God,  
You Promised

I will destroy the carved images and cast idols that are in the temple of your gods. I will prepare your grave, for you are vile.

-Nahum 1:14

"WE PUT THE HIC IN  
VEHICULAR HOMICIDE"

Audrey Kishline, the founder of Moderation Management, an alternative to Alcoholics Anonymous that promotes moderate drinking for some problem drinkers, pleaded guilty to vehicular homicide after killing two people while driving intoxicated.

ON SECOND THOUGHT, RAISE  
YOUR LEFT HAND

Anonymous sperm donors can be forced to testify in legal proceedings, the California supreme court ruled.

IN OUR DAY, A DUMB BASTARD  
WHO LANDED HIS PLANE IN AN  
ICY WASTELAND COULD DAMN  
WELL EXPECT TO REMAIN  
FROZEN THERE FOREVER

Famed aviator Dick Rutan was stranded for twelve hours after his plane landed on the North Pole and then sank through the ice.

THESE BOOTS ARE  
MADE FOR  
WALKIN', AND  
THAT'S JUST  
WHAT THEY'LL  
DO. ONE OF THESE  
DAYS THESE BOOTS  
ARE GONNA LOOK  
ADORABLE WITH A PAIR OF  
LAURA ASHLEY CULOTTES

Gloria Steinem, sixty-six, married entrepreneur David Base, sixty-one

BETTER RUN THAT PAST THE GUYS  
ON OZ

In reaction to games made boring because of increasing serve speeds, the United States Tennis Association is considering introducing new tennis balls. According to USA Today they want to use "a bigger ball, with more fuzz, because it turns out that small, bald balls travel faster than large fuzzy balls."

SPEAKING OF SMALL, BALD BALLS  
Reclusive author J.D. Salinger's daughter published a book revealing intimate details of her father's life

YOU SAY YOU WANT A  
REVOLUTION?

WE SAY YOU'RE  
GONNA NEED  
TIRES!

HIGH-QUALITY, PERFECTLY FINE, IMPROPERLY-INFLATED-BY-THEIR-OWNERS TIRES FOR BURNING. THOUSANDS OF SATISFIED CUSTOMERS IN GAZA, CHECHNYA, SIERRA LEONE, AND YUGOSLAVIA. THOUSANDS ALREADY IN STOCK AT BELOW COST PRICES! HURRY!



Firestone  
will not be  
responsible if  
tires are used  
improperly,  
such as on cars



Dear God,  
Is it true my  
father won't get  
in Heaven if he  
uses his Bowling  
Words in the  
house?

Anita

Dear Anita,

Don't worry, Anita. There is  
no heaven. Ha ha ha! Just  
kidding! I love that joke.

Yes, he'll be going to hell

God

Please Send  
me pony  
I never ask for  
anything before  
you Can Look it up  
Bruce

Dear Bruce,

According to our records,  
Christmas of '88 you asked for  
a Furby. The birthday of said  
year, you asked for a bicycle. Your  
relentless requests continued—  
last Christmas you asked for a  
puppy, which I gave you and which  
now I am taking back

God

Dear God,  
here's a poem

I Love you  
Because you give  
us what we need to live  
BUT I wish you  
would tell me why  
you made it so  
we have to die.

Daniel (age 9)

Dear Daniel

A Poem.

What you call love,  
You'll see is fear.  
I'll cause you pain,  
You'll shed a tear  
I make you die,  
It's no big trick  
Ask any adult,  
It's cause I'm a prick

God

Finally, after  
Children's  
Letters to  
God and the  
Children's  
Letters to  
God wall  
calendar,  
God writes  
back...

Dear God,  
I like the story  
about Chanuka the  
best of all of them.  
You really made up  
some good ones  
Glenn

Dear Glenn

What's "Chanuka"?

God

Dear God,  
I read  
the bible.  
What does  
begat mean?  
Nobody will  
tell me.

Love,  
Alison

Dear Alison

"Begat" means "gave  
birth to" or "caused to be  
born," as in "Abraham  
begat Isaac." They're not  
telling you because begatting  
involves fucking.

God

Dear God,  
I am doing  
the best I can.

Frank

Dear Frank,

That's not good enough

God



**Mother**  
 + Probably won't say no  
 + Won't blab to press.  
 + Will really make him feel like Daddy  
 + Sibling rivalry  
 - 75 years old.  
**Chance 32%**

**Wife**  
 + He's married to her  
 - She's 54.  
 - Graduated from Southern Methodist University  
 - Former librarian  
 - He's married to her  
**Chance: 12%**

**Wife of John McCain**  
 + Hot by D. C. standards  
 + Had a drug problem, probably still parties  
 + Husband now George W's bitch.  
 - Husband looks about ready to fucking snap.  
**Chance** 85%

- ⊕ Eight years younger than his wife
- ⊕ "Long-time supporter"
- Strong chance of not going back should he indeed go back.

**Chance 80%**

- ⊕ Ten years younger than his wife.
- ⊕ Described as "athletic"
- ⊕ Said to know him better than anyone else
- Said to know him better than anyone else

**Chance: 93%**

- Creepy similarity to Hillary.
- She's 59.
- Respected academic.
- Degree in 19th-century literature
- ⊕ Erotic similarity to Hillary

**Chance: 61%**

- Conservative
- Participated in *Character Above All* program on PBS.
- Tendency to mention Jesus Christ
- + Divorced.
- + Tore Hillary a new A-hole.
- + Gotta be gagging for it.

**Chance:** 27%

- + "19"
- + "Disease-free"
- + "Likes it so much."

Chance. "0" %

- ⊕ "Switched parties" when he met Bush
- ⊕ Gushes that "I liked him right away"
- ⊕ Probably good for a blow job

🔮 **Chance 59%**

**Daughter of Running Mate**  
 + She's 31  
 + Openly gay  
 + Possible three-way with Gingrich's sister  
**Chance 0%**

**Notorious Lays**  
 + Both easy  
 + Both spread for fame.  
 - Both will talk to press  
**Chance 12% (Darva)**  
**0% (Monica)**

+ "19"  
 + "Disease-free"  
 + "Likes it so much."  
 Chance. "0" %

Bermuda shorts are now acceptable attire in Bermuda's parliament

Britain's home secretary, Jack  
Scraw said that soccer hooigan-  
ism, racism, and thuggery  
have their roots in a distorted  
national self image and  
called for an effort to  
redefine what it means to  
be English.

When asked what he thought about *Sex and the City*, George W. Bush became upset. Until a media handler assured him that the question referred to an HBO show

A U.S. Navy vessel apprehended seven naked drug runners off Colombia's coast after the men dumped millions of dollars' worth of cocaine into the ocean, doused themselves with gasoline, and then rammed the Navy vessel.

In the past year, the average bra purchased in America has grown from 36B to 36C.

Mark David Chapman, John Lennon's assassin, asked to be paroled, claiming he posed no threat to Yoko Ono.

Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein commissioned a copy of the Koran written in his own blood

Sixty one percent of American parents condone spanking as a regular form of punishment for young children.

Boys Town changed its name to Boys and Girls Town.

Rapper DMX was sentenced to fifteen days in jail and fined \$350 for marijuana possession and various traffic violations.

reasons to kill yourself

75-9 The completely unrealistic, unattainable state of perfection portrayed in *Walls* paper magazine that you fucking fail to even monthly 75-1 It's not like Lawrence. It is Joseph Lawrence 75-2 No wait it's Lawrence Fishburne 75-3 The implicit judgment of the aftermath of the Anne Heche Ellen DeGeneres debacle that something did to get ahead okay but eating pussy is a whole different thing 75-4 Cindy Crawford's Cindy's Corner on which she applies her posing and lip-pussing expertise 75-5 Evaluating baby products safely and efficacy 75-6 Kosher Sex 75-7 Dating Secrets of the Ten Commandments 75-8 Living Rhames as Johnnie Cochran 75-9 Rich Silver as Robert Shapiro 76-0 Bruce Kirby as Barry Schick 21-5 Christopher Plummer as F Lee Bailey 76-1 Harmony Korine 76-2 Internet Entertainment Group 76-3 \$23,000 antiestablishment Harley-Davidsons 76-4 **Compassion for nonhumans greater than compassion for actual humans**



got prostate cancer?

[www.MilkSucks.com](http://www.MilkSucks.com)

20 "Hey you guys wanna like protest  
 the WTO or something?" 21 *Lucretia Regan*  
 Tonight 22 From *Buddhistanna's* Shaolin  
 Temple to Billy Blanks's *Toe Box* 23 *Power*  
 yoga 24 That evil little pain in the ass in  
 those Pepsi commercials 25 That evil lit-  
 tle pain in the ass in those Pepsi commer-  
 cials is a movie 26 Ruck-coins Kiss are  
 a Pepsi commercial 27 "Commercial is  
 just another avenue for actors to cre-  
 atively get their brand out there" Peter  
 Hersh of CAA 28 Moby, shard at work, fin-  
 ish! jenn's xani bloom is soon to be com-  
 mercial angles 29 *The American* Adver-  
 tising Museum 30 *Telemundo*, the  
 constant reminder of what the American  
 cultural is really is 31 *Solt* movie  
 32 Those *Shoshanna* commercials in which  
 those adobe kids act as adorable CEOs  
 33 The new Michael Richards show tried  
 its best to stay away from seeming too  
 much like *Seinfeld* 34 *Focus* groups  
 insisted that the show be a little bit more like  
*Seinfeld* 35 The show was rebuffed, and  
 focus groups now insist that the show's  
 too "like *Seinfeld*" 36 *Focus* groups  
 37 directed by Jason Alexander 38  
*Shoshanna* costume is a lingerie designer  
 39 *Shoshanna* costume has been referred  
 to in *Play* magazine as "Shoshanna's  
 costume designer" 40 *SOBe* Anchor  
 people *Shoshanna* is *Shoshanna* 41  
*Whazzup?* 42 *Whazzup?* Parodies 43  
*Dign* dress *Whazzup?* a parody in *Peter*  
 refused to be photographed near its *Incarn*  
 flag because it too closely resembles  
 the Gay Pride banner 44 "Hey, who's sorry  
 about that whole *Tigger* thing" *Allen*  
*Meison* 45 *Sal* o' *Meison* *Amadeus*, a  
 musical featuring the music of J.H. *Sal* 46  
 David Blaine *Street* *Magician* 47 *Street*  
*Magician* is *Street* friends with *Enrique*  
*Dicajano* 48 In order to write his latest  
 album *Cool* said he spent a week at  
 River's and witnessing first-hand the pain  
 and degradation of man's inhumanity to  
 man. Then wrote lyrics like "Mirror, mirror  
 on the wall / Who da man before Pac and  
 Bigger Smalls" 49 Eminem told re-  
 porters to "kiss my naked white ass  
 when you let me get to you, you let me  
 win, so I'm winning." 50 He was right  
 51 You never dated anyone a *Missy*-*Ass*  
*Freight* but you don't have women chas-  
 ing your limp down the street 52 *Dumps*  
 like a truck 53 *Cops*, she did it again  
 54 *Amcancr* 55 *Free Mum*

COME ON, WHAT'S A FEW DEGREES  
OF ELEVATED BRAIN TEMPERATURE?

# NOKOROLA



**Hollywood Liberals**  
The GOP's best recruiting tool.

**Senior Citizens**  
They win a couple of world wars, and all of a sudden they want their prescription drugs comped.

**The Little Guy**  
Was a go-go crying to Al Gore, right? All his battles.

**John McCain**  
Eingold wrote most of the bill, but McCain gets all the chicks.

**The Undecideds**  
Would have wanted to hear more about where that under fellow stood on the issues that matter to me.

**Yale**  
Always turning out anti-authoritarian robes, who know how to stand up to Washington.

**The TV Networks**  
O'Reilly: Cream of the crop.

**Joe Lieberman**  
Secretly a devout Catholic.

**The Kiss**  
Every single person who witnessed it has been killed, one by one.

**Barbra Streisand**  
At home, always refers to Brodin as "the First Lady."

**The People**  
Per Bush, he can come to them with a perfectly workable plan for gun-toting anarchy, but still they vote for Mr. Ivy League.

**George W. Bush**  
It turns out, stands for "whatever."

**Bush's Handlers**  
During second debate, spoke too loudly into their secret microphones, making reception of Bush's earpiece blurry and distorted.

**Hillary Clinton**  
Paraded to all 62 counties in New York State.

**Warren Beatty**  
Didn't really understand how much ego you have to have to run for the presidency.

**Jeb Bush**  
In a previous election, he ran three times to win a seat with his brother.

**Hollywood Liberals**  
Dreamed things that never were and thought, "Hey, let's focus-test that on an eight-year-old."

**The Little Guy**  
Doomed.

**The Undecideds**  
Actually decided in June, just liked having Old Man Zogby calling all the time.

**Joe Lieberman**  
Swears like a motherfucker.

**The Kiss**  
Just plain gross.

**George W. Bush**  
Signature execution line: "My ten-minute review of your case has convinced me you must die" could be funnier.

**Hillary Clinton**  
Just seems more comfortable around ethnics.

**Jeb Bush**  
Secretly had 20 bucks on Gore.

**Hollywood Liberals**  
Yeah, sure, those DreamWorks guys never would have named names.

**Hollywood Liberals**  
Lulled the Democratic party into thinking real life was just like *The West Wing*.

**Joe Lieberman**  
The momzer's always hocking me a tschaynik with the farshtinkener kreplechi.

**George W. Bush**  
His killy subliminal-advertising techniques made us crave rats for three months straight.

**George W. Bush**  
Has been dying to get loaded since 1986, plans to spend the next 100 days on an extended bender.

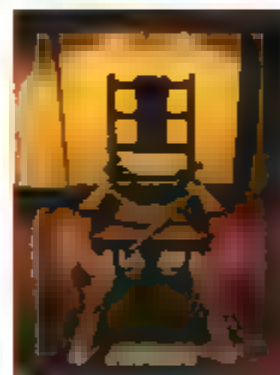
**Jeb Bush**  
Had the hubris to enter politics without his brother's painstaking preparation: 20 years of fraternity pranks, professional failure, and passing out every night in a hot tub.

DUBIOUS MAN OF THE YEAR

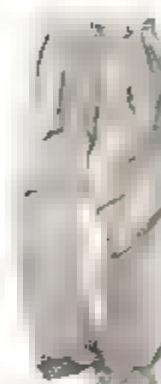
# Campaign

# 2000

SINGLE-ELIMINATION  
PLAYOFF BATTLE ROYALE!



**George W. Bush**  
Daddy gave him a hell of a whuppin' on November 9.



**Al Gore**  
Spent eight years with Clinton and all he learned about being president was, "Don't screw the interns."



**Tipper Gore**  
That Fleetwood Mac dance with Hillary sent us into an eight-year spiral of pills, depression, and binge eating, too.



**Tipper Gore**  
Wouldn't share her man with the interns, like the more progressive Washington wives.



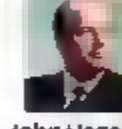
**Tipper Gore**  
Miss Parental Advisory in public, but back at the crib she's all "You're my ho" this and "Bust a cap" that.



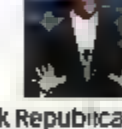
**Ralph Nader**  
Had deal with Bush to be named ambassador to France.



**Bill Clinton**  
Shackled Al Gore with the most prosperous economy in the history of humankind.



**John Hagelin**  
Eight years too late.



**Black Republicans**  
Tend to advance quite rapidly in the party.



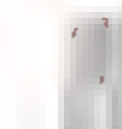
**Jim Lehrer**  
Always mouthing the words, "love you to Doris Kearns Goodwin just before they go on the air."



**Adam Clymer**  
To his close friends, is just a regular asshole.



**Al Gore**  
Fragged his lieutenant in Nam.



**Al Gore**  
When caught fighting at St. Albans, would tell headmaster that he was "fighting for you."



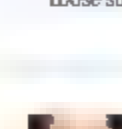
**Hippies**  
Thirty years later, finally realize dream of destroying country.



**Prescription Drugs**  
If you take enough of them, Bush starts to seem like a plausible president.



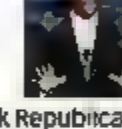
**Prescription Drugs**  
Loose stool.



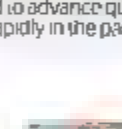
**George P. Bush**  
Another fucking Bush.



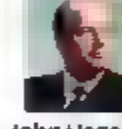
**Black Republicans**  
Courageously fighting against the idea of promoting people on the basis of their skin color.



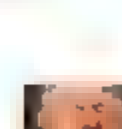
**Michael Moore**  
We were vaguely considering voting for Nader until he showed up.



**Dick Cheney**  
Pledged to turn Air Force Two into a "flying plea sure palace."



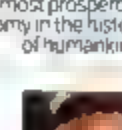
**John Hagelin**  
Boldly tried to save Reform party from self-destruction at the hands of a paranoid demagogue.



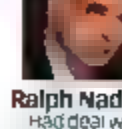
**Bill Clinton**  
Secretly had 20 bucks on Bush.



**The Issues**  
All those numbers and all that Beltway jargon—why can't it be about who's most likable?



**Spike Jonze**  
Used cinematic trickery and special effects to make Gore seem wonky, stiff, and uncool.



**Ralph Nader**  
Just before he was sex always says, "Fasten your seat belts!" Then, actually fastens his seat belt.



**Rage Against the Machine**  
"Machine" in question turns out to be a copier that keeps jamming.



**Tipper Gore**  
Has probably had sex with Al Gore.

FOR THE SURPRISE WINNER, THE  
ABSOLUTELY AND CERTIFIABLY  
DUBIOUS CHAMPION OF THIS  
GREAT DEMOCRACY, PLEASE  
TURN THE PAGE

BY PAUL TOUGH AND STEPHEN SHERRILL



# Dubious Man of the Year Tie!



Each may be the only man in America who couldn't beat the other freakin' guy.

## GOOD EVENING, I'M WILLOW BAY

Russian television station M1 broadcasts a program called *The Naked Truth*, on which a naked woman interviews newsmakers.

## AND I'M STONE PHILLIPS

M1 also has plans for a program called *Natural Selection*, on which a chimpanzee will conduct interviews.

## DON'T WORRY, FELLAS—DWORKIN'S STILL FREE

Gloria Steinem, sixty-six, married entrepreneur David Bale, sixty-one



## IT'S COMMONLY KNOWN AS INTIFADAITIS

An Israeli researcher believes Goliath suffered from acromegaly, a condition associated with gigantism that may have prevented him from seeing the stone flying at his skull.

## IT WORKED FOR BAGGER VANCE

University of Wisconsin administrators admitted they used computer retouching to add a black student to the cover of a brochure to project an image of diversity.

## BUT THE BLACK GUY WAS REAL

CBS admitted that it dubbed recorded bird sounds into the background of televised golf tournaments.

## SHE'S COUNTERSUING FOR RETURN OF HER BLOW JOB

A Kentucky man who won \$65.4 million in a Powerball lottery sued to recover \$500,000 he gave away to a woman during a spree of drunken generosity.

## GOOD FOR HIM

A Court TV reporter was held hostage for four hours by convicted murderer Kenneth Kimes, who grabbed her during the taping of an interview and held a pen to her throat.

## I MAY BE A DUMB JOCK, BUT I DON'T MOLEST LITTLE GIRLS

In 1997, after winning the Super Bowl with the Green Bay Packers, tight end Mark Chmura refused to visit the White House, citing Bill Clinton's philandering and immorality as his reason.



## OKAY, BUT MINE WASN'T FAT

In April 2000, Chmura was charged with sexually assaulting a seventeen-year-old girl at a liquor-fueled post-prom party.



## KATHIE LEE GOT ONLY \$5,000

Desperate to bolster viewership, CBS offered \$10,000 to the first contestant to volunteer to quit *Big Brother* so the network could replace him or her with a good-looking woman.

## IN AMERICA, IT WAS CALLED "CAMPAIGN 2000"

On the Dutch TV show *Beyond the Limits*, contestants run nude races with paper money crammed into their bodily orifices.

# A CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO THE AOL TIME WARNER MERGER AS TOLD THROUGH THE EROTIC ART OF ERIC STANTON (ALL DIALOGUE IS REAL)



## 365 reasons to kill yourself



## A second book of staggering genius by Jewel

A second book of fiction by Ethan Hawke. "Natural Blonde" by Liz Smith. American tourists who travel in Third World war zones and act surprised when they're taken hostage by rebel forces. "Hey, whoa, sorry about that decimating the population thing." Bureau of Indian Affairs. George W. Bush called a reporter from *The New York Times* a "major league asshole" while never once thinking to mention the cocksucker from *Newsweek* or the shit-stains from *Time*. "The joyous reality of a Jewish vice-presidential candidate only means that every four years we're going to have to pull out the Ethnicity List and make sure everyone gets a shot or we're never going to hear the goddamn end of it." "You're not allowed to sell your soul on eBay." "But selling it on *Meer the Press* is no problem." Cindy Adams's star-studded party in honor of her yokie jazz. "The disco that opened on a site at Auschwitz." Barbra Streisand's farewell concert is not a legally binding agreement.





Netsite: <http://www.esquire.com/dubious>

# The Best of Esquire.com/dubious

IF YOU TAKE A STEP BACK AND LOOK AT THIS PLANET OF OURS, YOU'LL SEE THAT IT IS BIG AND ROUND AND COVERED IN WATER, WHICH MAKES IT REALLY HARD TO BURN DOWN. BUT EVERY WEEK, ON ESQUIRE'S WEB SITE, WE DO OUR BEST

WEEK OF AUGUST 30

WEEK OF JULY 3

## "There is someone else,"

WRITES ANNE HECHT



It is with a heavy heart that I write this letter. My heart breaks for Ellen, and though I loved her deeply, I must admit I have found someone else. Have you ever come upon a poem so heartfelt and true that it made you change your entire life, made you question the very essence of who you are? It happened to me.

You faggots can vanish to volcanic ash and reappear in hell with a can of gas and a match

I was moved. This man, this Eminem, had touched me in a way that even Ellen could not. I devoured as much of his poetry as I could find, and, by the bedside

light, committed it to memory.

Their mother wasn't raped. I ate her pussy while she was 'sleep, pissy drunk throwin' up in the urinal.

It was like he knew me. I needed to know more about him. The answers, I discovered, lay buried in the subtlety of his prose.

I don't give a fuck if this chick was my own mother. I still fuck her with no rubber and cum inside her and have a son and a new brother at the same time.

He was a family man, and that was something Ellen could just never be. And so, last week, I called it off. Marshall, if you're reading this, here's one dyke bitch who won't keep eggin' ya.

Peace out,  
Anne

## CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'RE SCREWED

DR. J. CRAIG VENTER  
CELERA GENOMICS

WE'RE THE PRE-PAY-IN-FULL PEOPLE

Dear Sir,

The following are the results of your recent gene-mapping test. Our tests indicate that you are ugly. Your genetic mapping shows you to be of below-average intelligence. Late adolescence will bring with it chronic acne and excessive sweating, which will exacerbate your unfortunate genetic predisposition to low self-esteem. Throughout your life you will be plagued by frequent hemorrhoids and chronic infectious diarrhea, which will result in polyps, gastritis, and rectal itching.

You will suffer from collapsed testicles. That will soon be replaced by ballooning testicles that lead to migrating testicles before you develop testicular cancer.

You do not show the gene for migraines. Your headaches are simply an inoperable brain tumor. This will eventually cause some seizures and minor facial paralysis.

Fortunately, you will soon suffer a stroke, the result of a debilitating brain hemorrhage. You will thank God the day you are finally knocked cold by a motherfucker of a cardiac arrest. You will be a miserable shell of your former self, but by that time we will have the technology to revive you and force you to live.

Then, the Alzheimer's disease.

If you would like to kill yourself immediately, please call Dr. Jack Kevorkian at 1-888-END-IT-NOW.

WEEK OF MAY 15

## A Special Offer from the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan



Five years ago, I took it upon myself to bring together a million of my brothers on the steps of the Capitol of this evil nation, and I did call that day the Million Man March. Since that time, one motherfucker after the next has taken that name

and used it to his own manipulative machinations. Can you imagine if the week after Martin Luther King spoke in Washington, D.C., every asshole with a placard and a stick was having Dream rallies? Come to the "I Had a Dream People Wouldn't Have Abortions" rally this Friday, join us at the "Had a Dream People Wouldn't Wear Fur" march on Sunday.

Million Mom March? Shit, if I knew then that every whitey with a stomachache was going to Million March his ass to D.C., I'd have started a bus company.

But I don't wish to create divisions, my friends. I watched the

Million Mom March this past Sunday, and I was saddened. After all, it is mostly the asses of young black brothers in which the caps in question are being popped. But I watched the rally and thought, where's the magic? Where were the riot police? Where were the Plexiglas bulletproof shields?

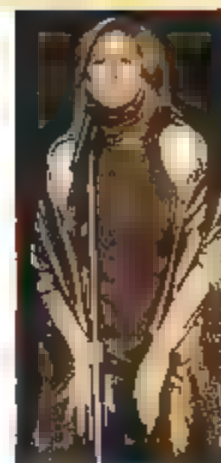
Next time you're pissed off, why not let the Nation of Islam organize your rally? Nobody else knows how to get a bug up the Jew media's ass quite like the Nation. If the Reverend Minister can't get Tom Brokaw to cover your march, nobody can.

We carry a full line of posters

and T-shirts, and our staff of writers will help you create unforgettable, inflammatory rhetoric to make your special day truly unique.

The presence of the Nation will give even the most mundane issues the cachet and pizzazz of a full-blown societal problem. Your issue deserves the best. Animals are being mistreated? Women aren't paid enough? Someone keeps stealing my pen? As we like to say around here, "Whatever your beef, we can cure it." Your riot is waiting. Call the Nation of Islam today. And, hey, tell them Louis sent you. Fucking Jews.

WEEK OF JULY 24



## Has Anyone Seen My Foreskin?

The final Barbra Streisand concert is only a few months away now. Dear God—the whining, the bitchiness, the \$2,500 tickets. If I can find my foreskin, have it reattached, and officially hand in my yarmulke, might not kill myself for being Jewish. If found, contact me at shalom\_auslander@yahoo.com.

WEEK OF JUNE 19



## A RARE GLIMPSE INTO THE EDITING PROCESS OF THE CENTRAL PARK FILMMAKERS

A DAMN SHE'S FINE  
B CHECK IT. INTERCUT THE BOOTY CLIPS WITH THE WET T-SHIRT CLIPS. SO IT'S ALL LIKE THEMATIC AND SHIT.  
A HOLD UP. YOU GOT MAD CONTINUITY PROBLEMS.  
B STEP OFF.  
A IN THIS SCENE, THIS PUTA HAS HER SHIRT ON. BUT IN THIS SCENE THAT VERY SAME PUTA HAS HER SHIRT ALL OFF.  
B I HEAR WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, G. BUT I THINK THAT THE ESTABLISHING SHOT AT THE OPENING TELLS YOU RIGHT AWAY THAT YOU'RE AT THE PARADE.  
A IT ISN'T A QUESTION OF ESTABLISHING LOCATION. IT'S A BELIEVABILITY ISSUE.  
B YD, THE VIEWER ISN'T CONCERNED WITH THE BITCH'S CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT. WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH IS THE SPECTACLE.  
A DON'T GIVE ME THAT GUY DEBORD BULLSHIT. EITHER THE PUTA IS NAKED OR SHE ISN'T. I'M TALKING ABOUT THE CHOICES A RESPONSIBLE FILMMAKER MAKES. BITCH, I'M WATCHING THIS, THAT SEEMS LIKE AN EDITORIAL STAKE AND, MALL, "HOLD UP, MY SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF HAS BEEN COMPROMISED."  
B TRUE THAT MY BAD. SHE'S FINE. THOUGH.  
A DAMN, SHE'S FINE.

WEEK OF AUGUST 30

## THOU SHALT NOT LIVE

A SERMON FROM THE VATICAN'S PONTIFICAL ACADEMY FOR LIFE

Last week, the Clinton administration allowed federal funding for embryonic-stem-cell research, which we at the Vatican called a "gravely immoral act."

Since then, many blasphemers, nonbelievers, and other stupid idiots have called into question the Church's position. "If there is a way to save a life," these forked-tongued sinners ask, "wouldn't God want us to?" Their question comes from the misguided notion that God is good. Which He isn't. Look around. In fact, there is a long-lost tale in the Old Testament from 6:17 we forget which book. It might be 17:6. And we quote.

"17 And it came to pass that Isaac came upon the well, whereupon he drew water for his two camels, his donkey, and his four goats. 18 And, God did send before Isaac a tough guy, and the tough guy began to beat Isaac and steal his water. 19 And the Lord spoke to Isaac, saying, 'Do not save your life, my son.' 20 And Isaac called out, saying, 'But, Lord, he is delivering unto me quite the thrashing, and the Lord did not answer. 21 And the tough guy continued to whale upon Isaac, and he stole his water and his two camels, his donkey, and his four goats. 22 And the Lord saw and said it was good.'"

We don't really see how anyone can argue with that. There is another ancient tale that relates that God gave Moses the Eleven Commandments, the eleventh one being Thou Shalt Not Live. Commentators tell us Moses saw that that would have ruined the five-commandments-per-side layout, and so God settled for ten.

Or maybe there was a third tablet and Moses couldn't carry it down. Yeah, that's it. Moses could only carry one in each arm, and he forgot to go back up and get the third one, and that's why God hates the Jews. Amen.



WEEK OF MAY 29

## A HEARTFELT MESSAGE FROM DAVE THOMAS

Please refrain from calling the victims of last week's shooting the "Wendy's victims." Wendy didn't kill anyone. In fact, she was home with me, enjoying a Chicken Breast Fillet for only \$2.99 while I had the 1/2-lb Double. We are truly sorry for this



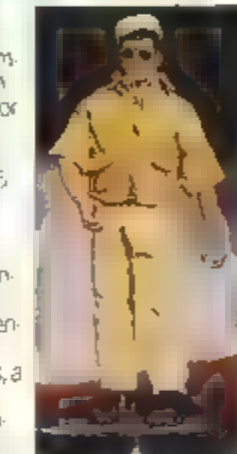
terrible crime, and we are so full of grief it feels like we've just had a Big Bacon Classic for only \$4.99, including large fries and a Coke. I hope they fry those killers the way we do our Spicy Chicken Fillet.

Our Biggie Size regrets,  
DAVE THOMAS

365

reasons to kill yourself

1. Jesse Jackson, exiting the Barbra Streisand \$2,500-a-seat concert, called it "the ultimate thing, the ultimate thing, the ultimate thing, the ultimate thing." After a week of hysterical reporting of the possibility that their bottled water was leaking in New York City, the media blamed public hysteria. 10:00 AM, 10:25 PM. Full coverage of the Roger Clemens bat-throwing incident. 10:26 PM, 10:30 PM. Wait, in the Middle East, multiple reports of the Barbra Streisand concert in Africa. Subway Series. Paul Simon sang a musical tribute to Joe Torre. Isabella Rossellini's cosmetics. The JFK action figure from Hasbro.



Webcams. Hushyn. Tim Burton filming a commercial for Tropicana. Kevin Smith filming commercials for Coca-Cola. Will Smith's children's book. Kate Cox's children's book. Volcanic eruption. Deezha! Communications, a Washington, D.C. PR firm. 30. A Clinton PR firm, Hunzinger Infirmary AC, was hired to improve the image of Libya, home of Muammar Qaddafi. 32. A former woodworker, living on disability and panhandlers, died in a fire, and the only reason anyone died was that he was a panhandler. He had lost a leg in a mine and a world-famous mulligan. He was a panhandler. For a moment there, Robert Downey Jr. was free and Wertheimer was in jail. 33. Tom Green still has a crush on Wendy. 34. Tom Green is marrying Drew Barrymore. 35. You only need one testicle. 36. The outside chance national phones might not be harmful. 37. The use of clear's heartfelt ode to depression in "White Room" to sell white Mac computers. 38. Two Reform party candidates. 39. Fuzzy man.



40. Jean-Claude Van Damme as a Hasidic Jew. 41. Statistics drop, not a likely voters. 42. Zerk. 43. Bobby Knight. 44. Knight. 45. Mr. Knight. 46. Carrie. 47. Charlotte. 48. Miranda. 49. Samantha. 50. Howie. 51. Terry. 52. IR. 53. Kil. 54. D'Usure. 55. Containing two sark wiper gloves for rubbing on the knees and a pair of you pants for that. 56. Not really white-collar look. 57. Kenneth Cole still thinks shoe puns are funny. 58. Jarvis. 59. Hapster. 60. The. 61. Brian. 62. Puppets. 63. The. 64. Fox. 65. Tiger. 66. ES. 67. Mizrahi. 68. Isaac. 69. Mizrahi. 70. Ine. 71. man. 72. show. 73. while. 74. ye. 75. r. 76. g. 77. s. 78. d. 79. a. 80. n. 81. c. 82. e. 83. s. 84. The. 85. Time. 86. magazine. 87. funny. 88. pages. 89. The. 90. deep. 91. personal. 92. shame. 93. you. 94. experience. 95. when. 96. you. 97. realize. 98. you. 99. ve. 100. just. 101. been. 102. waking. 103. down. 104. the. 105. street. 106. humming. 107. Gap. 108. commercial. 109. It. 110. has. 111. been. 112. a. 113. really. 114. long. 115. time. 116. since. 117. we. 118. actually. 119. heard. 120. from. 121. God. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365.

365. Next year.



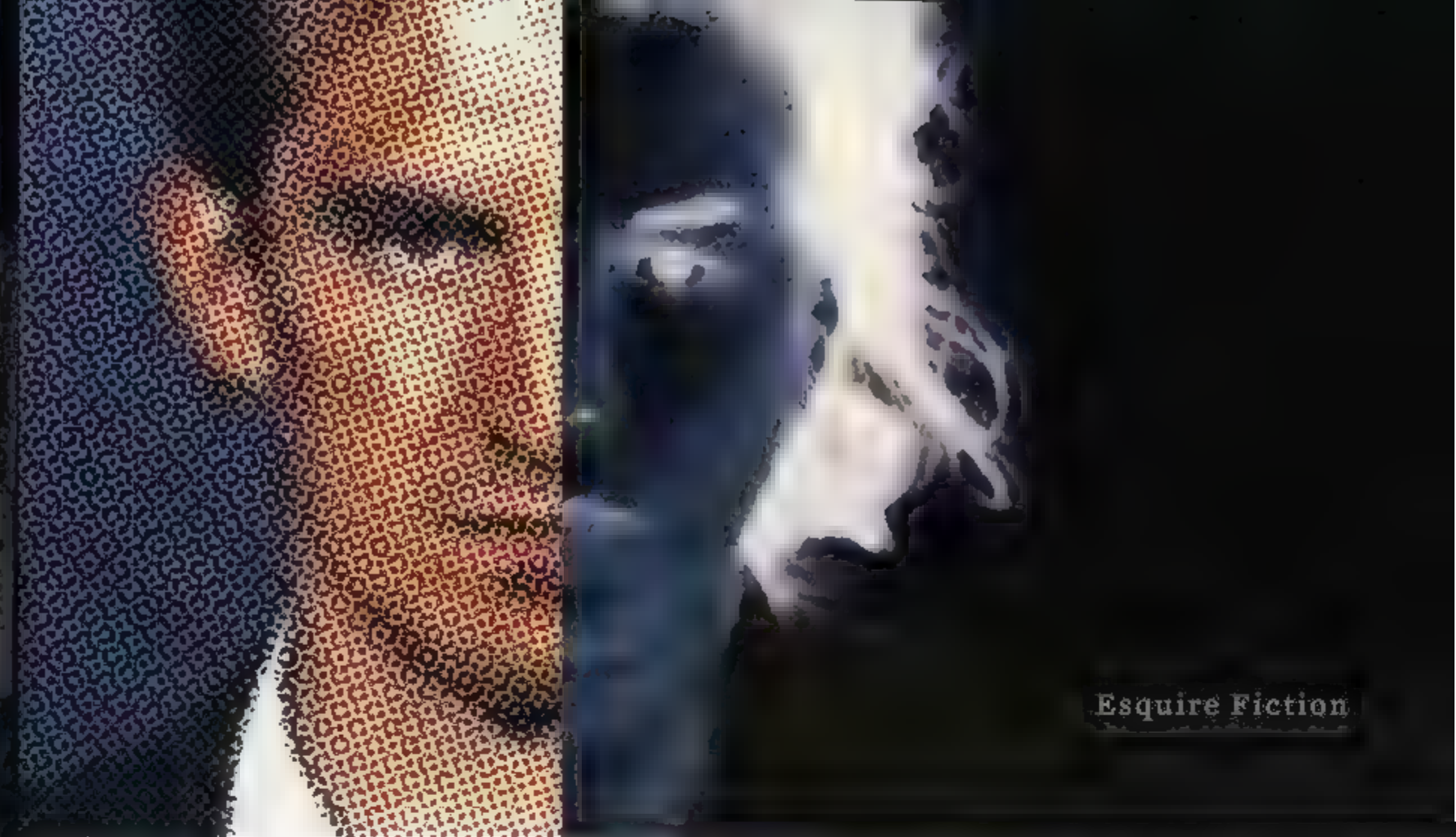
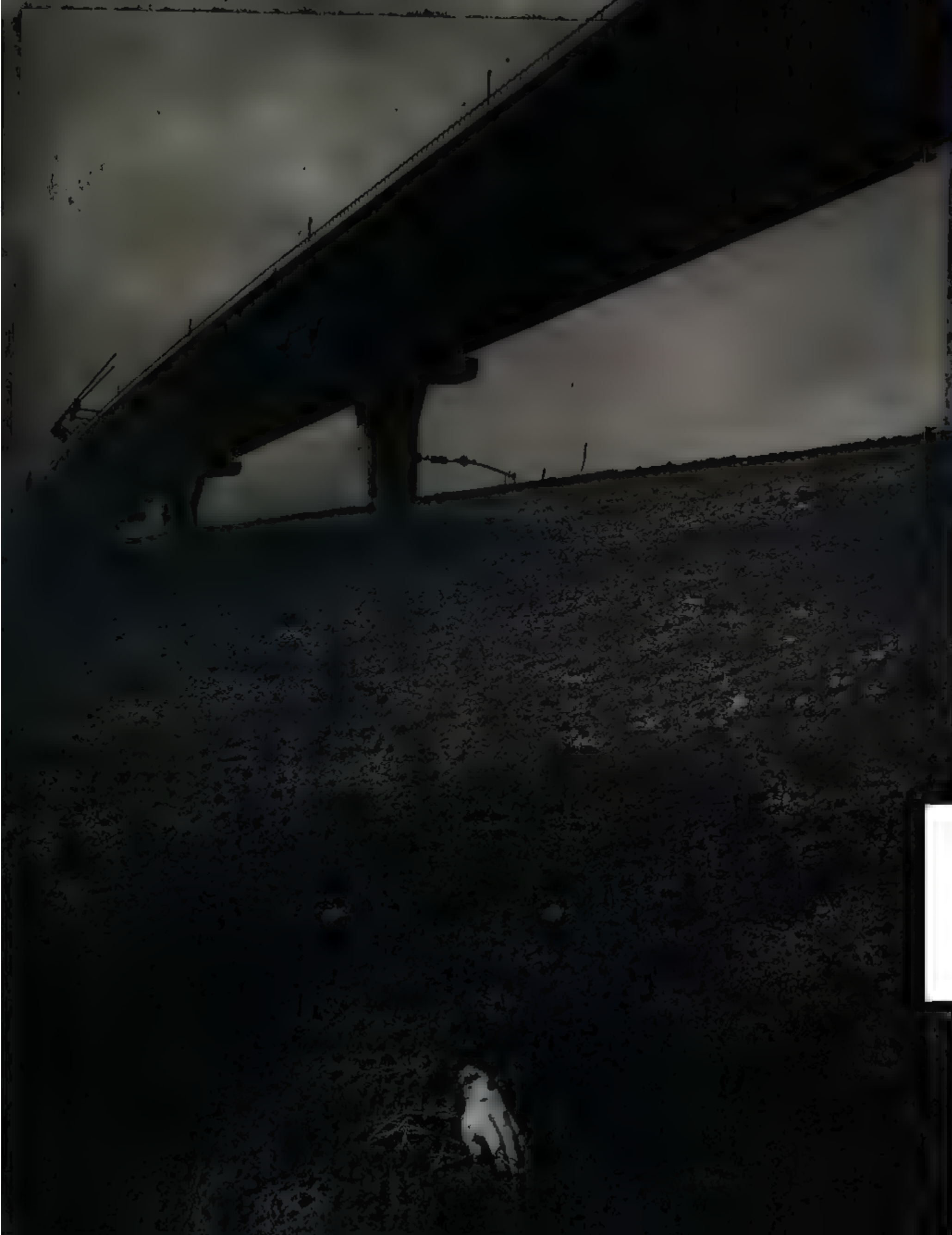
# What I've Learned Don Rickles

Comedian, 74, Los Angeles

**No matter where you go** in this world, you will always find a Jew sitting in the beach chair next to you. **When you stand alone** and sell yourself, you can't please everyone. But when you're different, you can last. **Famous people** are deceptive. Deep down, they're just regular people. Like Larry King. We've been friends for forty years. He's one of the few guys I know who's *really* famous. One minute he's talking to the president on his cell phone, and then the next minute he's saying to me, "Do you think we ought to give the waiter another dollar?" **Sex is great**, but when you get to be my age, you've got to pace it a little bit. Otherwise you get tired. **I don't have regrets.** I've never sat here and thought, "Gee, if only I'd done *The Man Who Came to Dinner* on Broadway, I would have been happier." **You can't study comedy;** it's within you. It's a personality. My humor is an attitude. **The thing I love** about Vegas is that it's a melting pot. It's like working Ellis Island. **Once in a while**, when I'm alone, I think about my age. I think, "How many more years do I have on this earth?" But I can't really conceive of dying. Somehow, in my head, I don't think I'll die. I know that everybody dies, of course. I just think that it'll never come to me. It's crazy, but there it is. **People think being** in your seventies means sitting around in a chair with a blanket over your legs, drooling. **I can sit all day** in a comfortable chair and watch ball games, but I don't need a blanket. **I've got an accountant** who's been with me forty years. If he makes a mistake, he dies. **Showbiz is great** if you're successful. **Struggling is hard** because you never know what's at the end of the tunnel. **I don't feel an obligation** to give everyone a hard time, but when they're important people, it's fun. I've met every president since Gerald Ford. When you go in the reception line and they announce your name, they all look at me the same way. They all go, "Oh, nooooooo!" You can see it in their eyes. They're like, "Oh, Jesus, he's gonna say something! Here I am, this little Jew from the neighborhood, and the president of the United States is cowering. Now *that's* entertainment!" **Asians are nice people**, but they burn a lot of shirts. **Political correctness?** In my humor, I never talk about politics. I was never much into all that. **I don't care** if the average guy on the street really knows what I'm like, as long as he knows I'm not really a mean, vicious guy. My friends and family know what I'm really like. That's what's important. **Hollywood has changed.** It's not glamorous like the old days. Last time my wife and I went down there to go to the movies, we got car-jacked by a guy with a .357 Magnum. **I've never walked** off stage and said, "I shouldn't have done that." Because when you do what I do, you're like a fighter. You throw the right hand and say, "That's what got me to this dance." You can't have doubt. If you have doubt, there's no show. **It's tough having** the last name Rickles. Luckily, my kids handled it great. **I used to play golf.** I wanted to be a better player, but after a while I realized I'd always stink. And that's when I really started to enjoy the game. **Room service is great** if you want to pay \$500 for a club sandwich. **One time I did Carson** and I made a joke about a black guy in the audience, and Carson stopped me and said, "Show me a black guy." The camera panned the audience, and there was no black guy. And I said to Johnny, "Did they laugh?" The answer was yes. And that's all that matters. **I always rib people**, but nobody ever gives me a hard time. I don't know why. Maybe they're afraid of what I might say. There's probably a lesson in that somewhere, but I don't know what it is. **The old days were** the old days. And they were great days. But now is now. ■







Esquire Fiction

In May 2000, Steve and Kenneth Kees, mother and son, a  
artist team, were convicted for the July 5, 1981, murder of Mary  
barron, a 30-year-old Irene Silverman. Her body was never found.  
So the big question we asked five crime writers: What even  
happened to the Silvermans? PHOTOGRAPH LEFT BY DAN WINTERS

# One Murder Five Writers

- 1) *Edna Buchanan*
- 2) *James Crumley*
- 3) *Stephen Dobyns*
- 4) *Peter Straub*
- 5) *Jeffery Deaver*



# Goodnight, Irene

I'VE BEEN STOLEN, ABDUCTED from my palace like Helen of Troy, forced and twisted into a dark, airless place. Traffic snorts and growls around me. I must be in the trunk of a car. My back should be in agony, but I feel nothing. Is this death? † I was alone at my desk on this sleepy summer Sunday, Fourth of July weekend in a deserted city, when Manny Guer-rin popped in. He asked for a newspaper but was searching for me, his odd green eyes darting like a thief's at Tiffany's.

By EDNA BUCHANAN

Soon he was back, rolling a huge suit case on wheels. Thank God, he's leaving at last, I thought. He was eager to show me something. But I was wary in no mood for a tête-à-tête with the tenant from hell. I was busy, I said, and turned away, but he caught the back of my collar, tearing it. Cold metal struck the skin between my shoulder blades and fiery electricity surged through my body. Excruciating pain as though caught on a live wire. Knees buckled, all control lost, I couldn't move.

His suitcase is my shroud. Pins and needles prick my arms and legs. If they wanted me dead, he would have killed me then. Their voices rise and fall as they chat calmly in the distance, the low-life thug who resembles an actor one of those Fiennes brothers, and the older woman, his wig wearing paramour, a jowly Liz Taylor wannabe.

I'll be all right, I remember Eleanor Roosevelt saying: Women are like tea bags, you never know how strong they are until you get them into hot water. I may be eighty-two, but I'm strong. You must nearly die to learn how to live. I know how to live. I beat typhoid fever, didn't I?

I am missed by now. The police will find me. What a story I'll have to tell. The traffic sounds fade, the car stops. Voices. They're coming. Sunlight blinds me as they open the trunk and suitcase. Before I can speak, I feel the stab of a needle. She winds the syringe, the woman who hid her face from my security cameras, stayed in Manny's apart-

ment, and slept in the same bed. The maids couldn't wait to share that news.

He sweeps me up as though I were a doll, as Sam did when we were young and slides me into the passenger seat. He looks different: hair sprayed darker, wearing heavy-rimmed glasses. I glimpse a wheelchair in the back. Whose? My head is too heavy for my neck like the Elephant Man. Why can't I speak?

She checks a notebook. "Do you have all the documents? You haven't forgotten anything, have you, Kenny?" Why did she call him that?

"No, Mom," he replies. They kiss passionately in the moat.

"Isn't this fun?" she trills, voice giddy as she leaves.

He fastens my seat belt, and we drive off, just the two of us. I feel sick.

Highway signs flash by: New Jersey, Paterson. I try to lick my lips, they're so dry. I want to go home. He stops the car and smiles, reaching for—oh, God, another needle.

"You're about to have a heart attack, but you won't feel a thing," he says reassuringly. I want to demand, to plead, to warn, to beg, but I can only mumble. My mother still climbed the stairs, chewed coconut macaroons, and read for pleasure at age ninety-four. I have good years left, and plans. I feel the needle.

The car jack-rabbits, then speeds. "It's done," he tells her on his cellular as we screech to a stop. "We're here."

Where? I want to run, but my legs, the strong legs of a ballerina, won't move. He snatches the wheelchair out and scoops me up into it. Thank God this is a hospital. My vision blurs.

"Help me," he shouts, rushing me into the ER. "Somebody, please help! It's my grandmother. I think it's a heart attack."

I'm lifted, strange voices surround me. Oh, no, I remember when my Sam died, when Mother died.

"Her name is Sonia Epstein," he tells them. "She's eighty-seven. I was taking her out to lunch when she just slumped over in the car."

What the hell is he saying? My name is Irene Zambelli. They call me Zambi. My married name is Silverman, and I'm eighty-two. Born poor in New Orleans, I made my dreams come true. My home is a beaux arts showplace on the Upper East Side, in the heart of the world's most exciting city, surrounded by art, antiques, and Manhattan's glitterati: Actors, writers, and artists, creative, witty, and beautiful people, sip my champagne and dine at my table.

"Here's her medication for her diabetes, her heart condition. He's thrusting pill bottles at them. "And here's her Medicare and Social Security cards."

No, no, none of it is mine. I am not diabetic. My heart is sound. I sip Veuve Clicquot, my favorite bubbly, for back pain. Don't listen to him. Oh, please help me breathe.

"Sonia? Can you hear me?" The nurses insert IVs in each arm, attach wires to my chest.

Sonia is not my name. I was born Mary Irene. My mother was Greek, my father Italian. The lights are so bright, the strangers so busy. Dizziness engulfs me.

"Her heart rate is dropping," someone reports.

"Blood pressure dropping,"

"Oh, please, don't let her suffer," he pleads. "She's been sick so long. She wanted nothing more done."

Don't believe him. Don't believe him. I can't breathe, even with a tube in my throat.

"I'm getting no response."

"We have a flat line." The activity around me slows, then stops. I feel ethereal as when I danced. Drifting slowly toward the ceiling, I execute a graceful, mid-air tour jete to observe my exposed body sprouting wires and tubes on the table below.

The son of a bitch huddles nearby,

hands to his head. A sympathetic nurse touches his arm. She looks as though her feet hurt, her eyes cloaked by the weary veneer of one who sees too much. Turn me over! I cry. See what they did! See the stun-gun marks on my back! Look for the needle tracks in my thigh!

Instead, she watches sympathetically as my murderer whispers, "Goodbye, old lady," in my ear. The nurse watches compassionately. So he was an actor after all. I hope he burns in hell.

My dog, George, my splendid home, the tomatoes staked in my rooftop garden, my gardenias, and the cats. Who will care for them and love them as I do?

I watch him give the head nurse what he says is the name and number of my personal physician. I don't know that doctor. More lies.

The nurse checks the name, calls, speaks briefly, takes notes, then calls another number. Head still in his hands, he watches slyly from between his fingers as she talks to someone at the county medical examiner's office.

They will find the truth, see that I'm not diabetic, had no heart condition, was not confined to a wheelchair.

"A long history," the nurse is repeating. "Diabetes, heart disease. I've got her meds. Next of kin arrived with her. Her doctor saw her last week and was amazed that she lasted this long. She says she'll sign the death certificate."

She hangs up, then explains to Manny or Kenny, or whatever his real name is, that he is free to make funeral arrangements. The medical examiner says no autopsy is necessary.

Arrangements. My God, can this be real? Those can't be my pale bare feet, my body so small and still beneath the sheet. But I cry, I'm always careful. I don't go out alone. Don't travel anymore. I take the damn vitamins.

"She wanted cremation," he tells a funeral director over the ER pay phone, "to be bright like the sun. No service. She always wanted her ashes scattered into the sea from the air."

Lies! I want my last moment to be in the spotlight, like the Waltz Girl, spirited off to heaven in Balanchine's *Serenade*. I want a party for my friends, bouquets at my feet, the rush of a standing ovation for my final performance.

He leaves the hospital in a hurry, to pay cash at the funeral home.

My body is wheeled down to the hospital morgue, but I linger, watching and

waiting for the questions. I was alive and well, safe at home only three hours ago. Yet it's business as usual here, in the ER. A woman in labor, a skateboarder with a broken arm, car-crash survivors. I am not surprised to see my killer's mother arrive. She wears a dark wig, stethoscope around her neck, a doctor's name on her white lab coat.

Moments later, a stoop-shouldered, dark-haired man walks in with a clip board. They speak, then she signs the papers with a flourish. No one in the bustling ER pays attention.

The hearse awaits. The driver hums along with the radio, talks baseball with an assistant, and drinks coffee from McDonald's as I wait in his ear. With no one listen?

AFTER I AM ROLLED into the fire skin and bone reduced to grit and ashes, I remain, still wedded to my outrage and the gritty remains of a body once so lithe and graceful that Sam fell in love for life when he first saw me leap into a grand jeté as free from earthly ties as a bird.

My tacky faux-bronze urn, labeled SONIA EPSTEIN, is released to a gaunt, middle-aged man they call the Captain. At his small house, identical to all others on the block, he places it on a garage shelf lined with a dozen more urns and boxes. We wait through rainstorms and blizzards, freezing temperatures and heat waves, as the Captain lives his soap opera existence: kids, dogs, and a second wife who curses like a longshoreman. For us, time has stopped. Twice, he

wrestles home Christmas trees. On a hot summer night, with the house full of kids, he and his wife get tipsy on cheap wine and engage in clumsy sex in the car. Whenever they quarrel, he stomps out, then returns home late, unsteady on his feet and reeking of liquor, ignoring our cries and whispers.

We creep her out, she pouts eventually, and refuses to enter the garage. She wants our space for her new hobby, painting ceramic eggcups and garish ashtrays. She threatens to expose him for failing to carry out the tasks he was paid for. God bless that woman. She nags.

In the dark before this autumn dawn, he and his oldest boy load us into his car for the trip to the airport. I've never been fond of air travel. Will the Captain, still shaky from his most recent binge, succeed in lifting this bucket of bolts off the ground?

Somehow he does. We climb, head north, and suddenly see the city I love, that grand and glorious mercurial megapolis that always made my heart beat faster. The boy opens the boxes and urns, spilling ashes into the cool air. The Captain coughs, curses, and levels off. The boy tips my urn and I drift into the rising sun and an easterly breeze as frisky and as light as air. The sun slants gold across the rooftops; a misty fallen cloud posing as fog creeps across the harbor. Higher and higher until I see my house and somehow I know that I am free while they are not.

World without end.  
Amen.

TURN ME OVER!  
I CRY, SEE WHAT  
THEY DID! SEE THE  
STUN-GUN MARKS  
ON MY BACK!  
LOOK FOR THE  
NEEDLE TRACKS  
IN MY THIGH!





# Motherlove

**M**

OMMY!" he squealed as his mother sliced off the old woman's head. A stream of blood poured into the small hazardous-waste drum. He tried to look away as the blood splattered into the sparse orange hair, but he was drawn to it. He leaned over the drum until his forehead touched the naked arm that dangled

By JAMES CRUMLEY

like a broken wing. The stun gun *should* have stopped the old woman's heart. "I can't help," he muttered.

"Just stay out of my way, honey-love," his mother said. "It's just like cutting up a chicken." She put the carving knife down and slipped out of her rubber gloves to light a thin, dark cigarette, which she held pinched between carmine nails. He stared at her nails, gleaming in the raw light, heat filling his loins in spite of himself. "You know, I once won a blue ribbon for my chicken," she said. "Back when I was a teenager."

She still smoked like a teenager, puffing madly, as if it were her first cigarette. Until recently, he had been able to see the lovely teenage girl behind the harsh strata of years. But in the last few months, she had been scamming hard and fast: the car dealer, the redneck RV salesman, then the old Jew who had misplaced his social security number and the old woman who had made the fatal mistake of renting him a room—scamming so hard and fast that the wash of the corrupt years seemed to have eroded her face and rebuilt an aged cosmetic mask in its place.

"Just like cutting up a chicken, honey-love," his mother murmured as she tossed the butt into the trash, slipped into her gloves, and picked up the carving knife.

He turned his back. Just as he had done down in the islands. She had stolen a fire ax from the casino hotel and used it to chop open the body cavity of the dead Arab, loaded it with coral, bound it like a mummy with duct tape, then rolled it into the mangroves, a banquet

for crabs. Sometimes, when he hadn't mixed the vodka and downers correctly, he dreamed that he heard the crunching strokes of the ax through the rib bones, the softer thumps as she buried it into the warm gutsack. And sometimes the thumps became the sounds of the snub nosed '38 as he pumped round after round into the salesman's torso before he tossed the body into the Dumpster.

Other times, the dream changed. But he could not remember those dreams. He just knew that his mother complained the next morning that he had stolen the covers or tried to take the whole bed. That's all he remembered. That and the fact that she often had ignored his needs during the past few months. It had started many years before, one night in his childhood when he was coughing and feverish. She was quickly bored with his whining and sniffing, and, still drunk and excited from one of her needless scams, she climbed into his bed, jerked his pajamas down, masturbated him to climax even before he could ejaculate. Sated, he slept in her arms, a red thumb nail in his mouth. That was the closest he'd ever come to a sexual relationship.

"It's done, honey-love," she said, interrupting his memories.

But he turned too soon. She wasn't quite done. The old woman's feet, tiny and wrinkled, the toenails sparkling with silver polish, still dangled from the rope, dancing in the bloody air as his mother sawed at the tough plastic line

He leaned over the small drum, gagging. "Not in the barrel!" she shouted.

He grabbed the small trash sack, then vomited so long and hard that when he looked into the bag, he expected to see at least blood if not viscera.

"Tonight," she said as the rope parted and the feet tumbled into the drum, "tonight we'll feast like royalty. I promise."

But he couldn't think about eating. He spit one last time, then stood up straight, breathing hard. His mother snapped open a canned cuba libre and tried to hand it to him. But he waved her off, grabbed a vodka miniature, then guzzled it, enjoying the burn as it filled the void left by his purge.

He tossed the bottle into the trash, then went to work. First, he picked up the shower curtain. The old woman had pitched into a doorway and split her ear when he hit her in the back with the stun gun. His mother, always careful to wear gloves in the old woman's mansion, had covered the ear before it bled on the floor and screamed at him to grab the shower curtain. But as he rolled up the plastic sheet now, he noticed a line of dried blood snaking across it. He tossed the bundle into the drum, then glanced into the trunk. Clotted blood had puddled in the corner of the cardboard lining.

"Oh, God," he said. "She wasn't dead."

"She's dead now, honey-love," she said. Then she hissed, "Shit," as she looked over his shoulder and saw what he saw. "Tear it out, goddammit. Rip it out."

The next few minutes passed in a frenzy of ripping and folding and stuffing the thick paper among the body parts in the barrel. Then they quickly poured the four five-gallon buckets of commercial epoxy into the barrel. He waited until the glue began to harden, then he slipped the lid into place, hammered it tight with a rubber mallet. They flattened the trunk with their feet. The gloves, the booties, then the raincoats went into the personal trash. Then everything into the trunk of the Town Car. The small drum gave them the most trouble. The hardening glue was heavier than the old woman's body parts. It would bind the pieces airtight until the fire, then the glue would burn twice as hot, burn until the bone became ash.

Then his mind suddenly filled with the rest of the dream. His mother's naked body hovered over him, her face twisted in terror as he shoved the pistol

into her soft body and jerked the trigger over and over again. Tears burned his eyes. One spilled out and splattered on the trunk. He quickly wiped it off, opened the door of the storage space, climbed into the Town Car, then drove fast down the long, empty space between the sheds to the industrial dump behind them. The dump was the reason they had paid a premium for the storage shed. He pulled through the gate, handed five thousand in cash to a short, dark man who thought he was illegally disposing of a barrel of PCBs, then went directly to the conveyor belt that fed the incinerator. They tossed the trash on the trundling belt and watched it rise

toward the scorched maw on the tower, watched it tumble into the roaring flames. Then he and his mother jumped into the Town Car to hurry back to the city and nail down their alibis.

"Later, honey love," his mother crooned as she pinched the inside of his thigh. "We'll be living fine. And tonight," she added. "After dinner I promise."

But he knew her promise was as empty as a grifter's gold mine, as pitiful as the old woman's feet dancing on empty air. She pinched his thigh again. But the only heat he felt was following him: the white-hot glowing ball of the flesh and bones and glue that would burn black forever in the back of his lost child's mind.

# Saying Hello

By STEPHEN DOBYNS

HE BROOMSTICK made a sharp crack as it hit the tile floor. "For Christ's sake, Sanchez, what if I ate Mrs. Silverman?" † "Jesus, Frankie, what are you saying?" Sanchez tried to look shocked, but he liked how he could toss Frankie

a smidgen of information and he'd take it on a hundred-yard dash.

Frankie was nearly eighty. Tall, thin, and grizzled, he'd been at the Pierre forever. Sanchez was in his late thirties, short and plump, a newcomer with twenty years. It was past midnight and they were in a back kitchen, four blocks from the townhouse where the old woman had been killed. At times they'd seen her on Fifth with Georgie, her boxer dog, probably half her weight but gentle.

For the past hour Frankie had been going on about the murder, arguing that it all turned on Rudy, the butcher, whom the son had put down as a reference to get the apartment, even though he'd never laid eyes on Rudy. Well, the reason they killed the old lady on that Sunday was that that was the day Rudy told her he didn't know the guy, and she went storming back to her townhouse.

"So she finds the jerk in the hall outside his apartment," Frankie had said, "and tells him about Rudy, calls him a thief and says she wants him outta there. The maid's down the hall with the dog and sees the whole thing. So the son's got to act fast and tells her he wants to show her something. The dog's jumping around. The old lady tells the maid to walk the dog in the roof garden. That's when the son zaps her with the stun gun,





but she's so small he can grab her and hustle her into his apartment, so the maid don't see anything's wrong. It looks like she's walking under her own steam."

"How come you know all this?"

Sanchez asked

"I get dog bones from Rudy to give to my doggy friends. I talk to the maids. Come on, Sanchez, you want to be a busboy forever? You got to keep your eyes peeled."

It was late and Sanchez wanted to go home. On the other hand, he disliked Frankie's smug expression and how five days a week Frankie was telling him how to do his job. Frankie had been at the Pierre for half a century, but always working his way down. And this was part of the reason, he thought, he had all the answers. Maybe fifty years ago he'd been a headwaiter; now he did a little sweeping after midnight in the pantries to supplement his social. But when had that shut his mouth? All evening he had been saying how Mrs. Silverman was buried in garbage bags over in the Meadowlands, and if given the chance, then he, Frankie, would dig her up and collect the reward. Well, Sanchez was sick of hearing about it.

So Sanchez had begun to smile, and he stared up at the ceiling as if he saw tiny cherubs perched on the automatic fire extinguishers.

Frankie looked at him doubtfully. "Hey, Sanchez, what gives? You passing gas or something?"

"Oh, I remember that Monday."

Sanchez said, "A rainy Monday at the beginning of July. Rudy brought in the meat order and a little extra. Said he'd made a mistake—a big box of stew meat. The cook ground it up for meat loaf for the help. I believe you had about three portions."

Frankie had a sudden attentive look. "Was that then?"

Right around the Fourth. The cook put in raisins and hard-boiled eggs. Tasted like old shoe leather with a smoky tang, you said. Almost a gamy flavor. Next time Rudy came in, you asked, if he had any more, and he said it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"Did he really say that?"

Sanchez nodded. "Then you had a lotta dog bones that week, had a whole pack of dogs trailing you down the street."

The trouble was that Frankie loved being right, loved getting to an idea before anybody else. So Frankie took Sanchez's

little hint and took off. Stop the presses! Call the police! Maybe Rudy had known the grifters after all. Couldn't he be bought? Anyone can be bought.

"And, Sanchez," Frankie whispered, "who can get rid of a body faster than a butcher?"

All the Dumpster business had been a hoax, Frankie concluded. Like the guy the grifters had killed in L.A. four months before had wound up in a Dumpster. And the Bahraini banker who disappeared in Nassau probably wound up in a Dumpster as well. So the cops are thinking they've got these grifters pegged. The son leaves the old lady's townhouse around one thirty that Sunday afternoon. The police grab him at the Hilton around seven. So the cops figure he's had five hours of tooling around the Garden State Parkway. That's a lotta Dumpsters, a lotta shallow graves. They haven't shoveled up so much of Jersey since Jimmy Hoffa disappeared. They even find duct tape and big garbage bags in his apartment.

"But if he'd already used them," said Frankie, "what were they doing in his apartment? Jesus, all those dog bones I got from Rudy, I kept thinking they were a funny shape. The dogs went wild for them, and that big boxer of the old lady's, Georgie, kept whining for more. But I was wrong. It wasn't more that Georgie wanted; he was just saying hello. Tell me, Sanchez, if I ate the old lady, does that make me an accessory?"

Within five minutes, Frankie was gone, whether to run away to his grandson in Seattle or sell his story to the News, he hadn't decided. Sanchez put on his coat. These human foibles—the need for attention, the need to be rich—what lessons they held for us all. Sanchez knew all along that the gift of stew meat had been later in the summer. But no matter. He was sure that he'd seen the grifter's green Lincoln go by on Fifth about one thirty that Sunday afternoon as he was coming to work. They'd been fortunate the old woman was so small. It would have been easy work to cut her up in the tub with a saw. Frankie had been right the first time. They would know already which areas in north Jersey did their garbage pickup first thing Monday morning. The son would choose busy sections where the green Lincoln wouldn't be noticed, merrily driving from Dumpster to Dumpster the Devil's own Santa Claus.

## A Regular Pair of Minstrels

BY PETER STRAUB

KENNY used logic on their whole situation while he and the mark stood alone in the first-floor lobby. One flight up,

his mother perched on the stairs. The mark, an old lady named Irene Silverman, was refusing to listen. No matter how carefully he tried to describe the particular reality they were in here, Irene got more and more insistent that they leave the house. Long after the point when resistance had ceased to be an option, all of a sudden some marks decided to buck the system. It slapped you in the face every time that stupidity. The marks planted themselves in the middle of the river and yelled, *Hold on, I don't like the direction of the current. Turn around and start flowing the other way.*

Like did that ever work? In all of mankind's history, did anyone ever turn the river around?

When Irene turned up the volume and started insulting him and his mom, he shouted back. He knew he sounded angry, but he was simply annoyed. Annoyance comes from an emotional space more serene than anger. Still, his face heated up, and Kenny hated having his face turn red.

Kenny grabbed Irene's arm, pulled her squalling into her apartment, backed her against the wall, and did what he had not been planning to do until late that night. He yanked the stun

gun from under his jacket and shoved the barrel into the old fool's neck. Irene stopped yammering and looked him straight in the eye. The gun made a little popping sound when he zapped her. Bang. Down she went, silent at last. "Mom!" he yelled.

The door to the apartment cracked open, and Sante Kimes slipped in. "Kenny, don't get frantic on me now."

He tried to bring his breathing under control.

Carrying the big duffel bag in one hand, his mother swayed toward him like Dorothy Lamour in one of those movies with Bing Crosby and Bob Hope.

"What took you so long?" she said. "You think I liked waiting up there, listening to the old bitch yell those things about me?" Sante prodded Irene's shoulder with a pointy Italian shoe.

Sante's little frown as she unzipped the duffel was so adorable, he wanted to hug her. Across the screen of his mind flickered a series of Mom's like slides or snapshots. Sante sashaying down Rodeo Drive in her red wig, slipping him a wink as she bamboozled a car salesman in Metairie, sipping a cappuccino, her legs stretched out before her, at a beachfront café in Miami. She reached into the duffel and handed him two rolls of duct tape and a box of garbage bags. "I'll go around the corner for the car. While I'm gone, you're going to strangle her. And make sure she's dead, hear me?"

"No problem." He had uttered the phrase hundreds of times in the course of their travels, but never with as little conviction. Kenny had never liked the part where he put his hands on the old woman's neck—the idea of touching her made him queasy. Some of her would come off on him, invisible flakes, tendrils of Irene.

When he heard his mother throwing things into the gym bag, he zapped Irene again with the stun gun. Her body bounced, her eyes turned flat and empty. He took out his handkerchief, balled it up, and pushed it into her open mouth. Instantly, blood gushed from her nose. He ripped off a short length of duct tape and plastered it over her mouth. His mother's footsteps crossed into the bathroom. Forcing himself to put his hands on her flesh, he bound her wrists and ankles with two more strips of tape. Kenny heard shower-curtain rings popping, and then his mother appeared and slipped a section

of shower curtain under Irene's head. "Wrap it up," Sante said. "I'll be out front. You carry the gym bag."

While Kenny was picking up the package that contained Irene Silverman, he felt a single, convulsive twitch and heard gas bubbles pop like baby firecrackers.

Outside, Kenny wiggled his arm to indicate the strain of carrying the heavy bag, and his mother nodded, leaned over, and popped the trunk. The trunk was a mess: Mom's wigs, boxes of papers, boxes of ammunition, documents, notebooks. He grunted the heavy duffel over the lip and dropped it, then his gym bag, on top of the rubble.

He got in the car. "So?" she said. "Everything's fine." Kenny put the car in motion. If he had imagined feeling Irene move once or twice during the wrapping process, he was not about to mention it to his mother.

She grinned at him with her real face, not her smiling public face but her real one, the one that always reminded him of some splendid, inhuman beast, a creature like a panther. "Couple of weeks, Kenny baby," she said, "we'll have more

money than we know what to do with."

They had discovered the perfect dumping ground while trolling through northern New Jersey two days earlier. A narrow road outside Red Bank led them to a condemned farmhouse and an overgrown field ringed with earth-moving equipment. Set low in the ground, the door to an old root cellar slanted upward over a flight of dirt stairs. A posted sign announced Monday, July 6, 1998, as the start of construction on a shopping mall and entertainment complex. The whole thing was going to be bulldozed, buried under tons of earth, and cemented over.

When the walls of the Lincoln Tunnel curved up around them, Kenny thought about all the traveling he and his mother had done that year: California, Detroit, Louisiana, Florida. They were like a rock band, encased in a private bubble of experience. "Hey, Mom," he said, "we're a regular pair of minstrels, aren't we?"

"More like a pair of bandits," she said, her eyes shooting sparks. Her face tilted toward him. His heart filling with fearful admiration, he leaned sideways and permitted his mother's lips to meet his own.

## A Simple Question

JUST WANT TO KNOW where her body is. That's all." † "And you are?" asked Lincoln Rhyme. † "I was her caretaker," the man said. "And her friend." † "She died two years ago?" Rhyme asked. † The man nodded. "I kept hoping someone would find the body. But no one ever did. Finally, I called the police, and they gave me your name. They said maybe you could help." † "I could've helped," Rhyme said irritably, "if somebody had asked me back then." † The caretaker shifted

BY JEFFERY DEEVER

from the neck down from an injury at a crime scene some years ago.

There was a third person in the room, a redheaded woman in her thirties, wearing a navy blue police uniform. She flipped through a police depart-



ment case file that had been messengered over that morning. Amelia Sachs gave Rhyme pertinent details of the case involving the caretaker's late employer, Irene Silverman.

"Fascinating woman," Sachs said, reading from the voluminous report. The policewoman explained that Irene had lived in New Orleans, had been a Radio City Music Hall dancer and, at the time the Kimeses descended into her life, was a landlady and philanthropist running a foundation devoted to her mother's passion for needlepoint. "Get to the relevant part, Sachs," Lincoln Rhyme said.

She explained that in 1998 the woman had been the victim of a vicious scam by Sante and Kenneth Kimes. Their plan was to get possession of Irene's Upper East Side mansion. They couldn't trick her into deeding over title to the \$7 million townhouse, so they decided to kill her.

"She was a fighter," the caretaker said. "She knew they were bad people, and she wasn't going to let them get away with anything."

Sachs continued. "One of the Kimeses' employees testified that one time, driving through New Jersey, they all stopped next to a field and Kenneth told him that this'd be a good place to dump a body. Not long after that, a witness saw a green Lincoln Town Car parked near Giants Stadium in Jersey. He saw a man checking out something in the reeds. It was like he was looking for a place to bury a corpse."

"The day of the murder, Kenneth argued with the maid, and Irene went downstairs to give him hell about it. They had a big fight. She was never seen again. That afternoon the Kimeses were collared on an unrelated charge, and the cops found Irene's passport, bankbooks, and keys."

"The attorney general's case, Sachs? Bare bones now," Rhyme said.

"That they knocked Irene out with a stun gun, strangled her, and dumped the body in one of the places in Jersey they'd scouted out earlier."

"And their defense?" Rhyme asked.

"Basically that a murder conviction wasn't possible without producing a body. And that there wasn't enough time between Irene's disappearance and their arrest to dump her body in Jersey and get back to Midtown."

"Forensics?"

"Hardly any," Sachs said. "No body, no blood, no tissue, no firearm residue,

no ballistics, no burial trace. Nothing impossible," Rhyme said. "The absence of evidence of the actual murder is impossible." Rhyme's paralysis did not preclude disdainful shrugs, one of which he now offered. He glanced at the caretaker. "What's your interest in this?"

The man's eyes avoided the criminalist's. "See," he said cautiously. "I hadn't taken a vacation for six years, and I took that weekend off. I called her on Saturday and she asked me to come home. She said that she was afraid of the Kimeses. I called back on Sunday, and a policeman answered the phone. She was dead."

"It wasn't your fault," Sachs said. The reassurance rolled off him, and he nodded slowly. "We just want to bury her in a cemetery someplace nice. So we can visit her. That's all we want to know. Where is her body? A simple question." Lincoln Rhyme said, "Give me two days."

AMELIA SACHS WALKED OUT the door of New Orleans Airport into damp and enveloping heat.

"Brother," she muttered to the man who strode forward to shake her hand. The deputy commander of criminal investigations for the New Orleans Police Department gave a laugh. "S'only November, Miss Sachs," he said. "Come visit us in August." Against her protests, he snatched her suitcase from her hand and trotted forward to open the door of his squad car for her.

"After you."

Welcome to the South, she thought. As they drove into the city, she briefed the deputy commander about what she needed. Although this wasn't exactly official business, the man was pleased to help. Lincoln Rhyme had once helped track down a killer who'd fled the Parish of Orleans to Manhattan. The commander dropped her at the Monteleone Hotel. She checked in, and an hour later the faxes from the NOPD started arriving. An hour after that, Sachs was braving the damp heat, having a heyday with her arthritis—as she trekked through the French Quarter, redolent with the smells of beer, fish waste, and fry oil.

The store she was looking for was near the French Market, next to the turbulent, beige Mississippi River. She didn't expect the place to be air-conditioned, and it wasn't.

The tiny shop was filled with arts and

crafts: the proceeds from the sale of which were donated to local charities. A lot of the items for sale were kitschy carved driftwood, lopsided glass Christmas ornaments—but in one corner Sachs found a dozen framed needlepoint samplers of scenes from New Orleans and Louisiana. She chose one that depicted a cottage in the bayou under a tree dripping with Spanish moss. She carried it to the counter.

"That's one of my favorites," said the clerk, a round woman with a smooth, chestnut brown face. "Be sorry to see it go." She rang up the sale.

"Who's the artist?" Sachs asked. "I buy 'em from this man, think he lives over on Canal Street."

Sachs ran a finger over the precise stitches of the stitching. She said, "They must be hard to do."

"The trick is you've gotta be patient," the clerk said, fishing for a shopping bag. "But then that's the trick just about most everything, don't you think?"

A DAY LATER, Irene Silverman's caretaker was back in Rhyme's bedroom, sitting awkwardly in the rattan chair. Amelia Sachs was there, too.

"I may have an answer," Rhyme said to the man, "for your simple question." He smiled.

"You do?" the caretaker asked. "Sante Kimes believed she had a brilliant plan, but it was based on a foolish assumption—that she couldn't be convicted of murder without a corpse. And that brings us to what, Sachs?"

"New Jersey," the policewoman said. "But the police searched for weeks," the caretaker said. "They didn't find her body there."

"Because Irene Silverman's not buried in New Jersey," Rhyme said. "Sante never intended to bury her there. After Irene disappeared, they knew they'd be suspects. And they knew, too, that crime-scene searchers would concentrate on New Jersey, where she and her son had mentioned intentionally hiding a body. By the time the police gave up, Irene's body would be hidden forever, and, with no corpse, Sante and Kenneth would have to be released."

"Hidden forever? Where?" asked the caretaker.

A simple question.

Sachs handed the caretaker a sheet of paper containing a number of Manhattan addresses.

The criminalist said, "That's a list of all the construction sites in Manhattan where concrete-work permits were issued for the week of July 6."

"I don't understand," the caretaker said.

"One of the most efficient ways to dispose of a body in a city is to dump it in a building site just before the concrete foundation is poured. Maybe there wasn't time for the Kimeses to get to New Jersey and back before they were arrested, but there was plenty of time to find a construction site in Manhattan."

The caretaker looked sadly at the list. "Do you have any idea which building?"

"Oh," Rhyme said, "none of them. I'm just giving you my professional opinion about where they planned to bury her body."

"There wasn't enough time for the Kimeses to've killed Mrs. Silverman, dumped the body, and then gotten back to the city," Sachs explained. "I drove the route myself."

"And if anybody could have made it in time," Rhyme interjected, "it would've been my Amelia. See, something didn't add up about their whole plan. A murder with no body is possible, but for there to be no physical evidence? Oh, a brilliant perp can hide or destroy most of the clues. But two jokers like Sante and Kenneth?" Rhyme nodded at Sachs. "Show him your souvenir from N'Awlins."

Sachs handed him a tissue-wrapped package. He opened it up and examined the needlepoint she'd bought.

"The clerk in the shop gave me the name of the man who donates needlepoint to the shop," she said. "I talked to him. He told me he gets them from this tiny old lady. She says she's too frail to go all the way downtown with them, and so he does it for her."

"Wait. You're not saying it's Mrs. Silverman?" the caretaker asked.

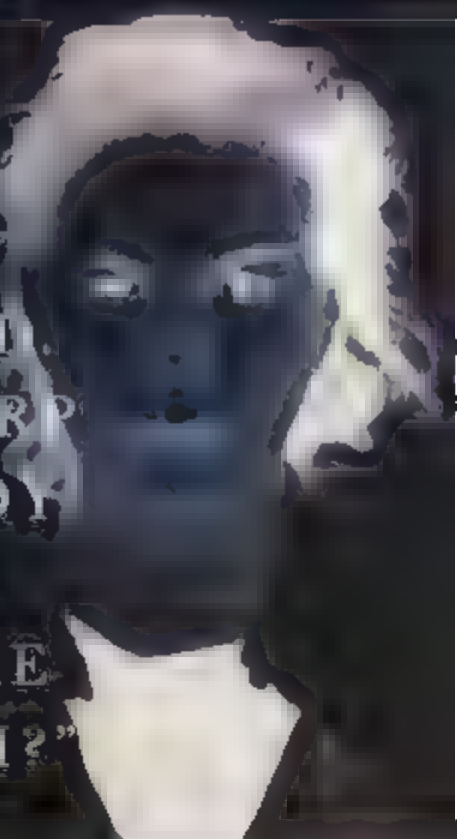
"He didn't know the name. But he said that the woman arrived a few years ago by herself. She'd lived in New York recently, but a long time ago she'd lived in New Orleans."

"Why?" the caretaker whispered.

"Why?" Rhyme asked. "Irene knew the Kimeses were trouble, that people like them never go away. And she knew, too, that sooner or later they'd kill her—or you or someone on her staff. So she came up with a plan of her own. She

FIND OUT HOW SACHS, RHYME, AND THE CARETAKER FIND THE BODY.

SEE SOMETHING  
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OH, A BRILLIANT PERP  
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started hiding cash so that she'd have something to escape with. Then, that Sunday, she intentionally got into a fight with Kenneth—so witnesses would hear the shouting. She left her bankbook and passport out in an obvious place so the Kimeses would find them—that would bolster the motive for the murder—and then took a cab to the airport. Flew down to New Orleans."

"Why there?" the caretaker asked.

Rhyme frowned. "That was the sentimental choice," he said. "I would've picked someplace I had no connection with. But she"—a nod toward Sachs—"talked me into checking it out."

"We got some help from a friend at the New Orleans police," Amelia said. "We knew that philanthropy and needlepoint were important in her life. So I had the cops pull business licenses for stores that donated sales proceeds to charities. I called them and churches and hospitals that sold donated goods. I finally tracked down one that sold a lot of needlepoint. And, as they say down there, voilà."

The caretaker's smile faded. "But the court'll release the Kimeses when they find out what she did. They'll try again to kill her. The police might even arrest her, Mrs. Silverman."

"Find out?" Rhyme asked with mock surprise on his face. "What's to find out? This is pure speculation. You asked me a simple question. Where's her body? My answer is that the Kimeses planned to bury her in a construction site in Manhattan. So there you have it."

The caretaker handed the needlepoint back to Sachs.

Sachs shook her head. "No, you keep it."

He thanked them. Sachs endured a sloppy hug, and Rhyme, a tearful gaze of gratitude.

After the man had left, Sachs opened a bottle of Scotch and poured a glass for herself and then added some to the tumbler beside Rhyme and placed the straw in his mouth. "You know, Sachs," he said, "you really could've spent another day down in the Big Easy—had some oyster po'boys and beer and found out for certain if it was Irene Silverman."

"I thought about it, Rhyme. But that poor guy—it was tearing him up that he didn't get back here in time to save her. I figured maybe it was better to leave things a little vague. This idea of closure—it's way overrated, Rhyme. I'll tell you, between certainty and hope, I know which one I'd take any day." ■

> A Pulitzer-prize-winning journalist and novelist, EDNA BUCHANAN is the author of *Garden of Evil*. In addition to many other books, her new novel, *You Only Die Twice*, will be published in April.

> Crime writer JAMES CRUMLEY is the author of, among other books, *The Wrong Case*, *Border Snakes*, and *The Last Good Kiss*.

> Poet and mystery writer STEPHEN DOBYNS is the author of twenty novels, including *The Church of the Dead Girls* and *Boy in the Water*.

> PETER STRAUJ is a horror writer whose most recent book is the short-story collection *Magic Terror*. He's also the author of *If You Could See Me Now* and *Ghost Story*, and the coauthor of *The Talisman* with Stephen King.

> Former lawyer JEFFERY DEEVER is the author of fifteen novels, three of them—*The Bone Collector*, *The Coffin Dancer*, and *The Empty Chair*—featuring the character Lincoln Rhyme.



# 7'0"

## Tim Duncan

The face well, the face should be standing on some seaward bluff on the west end of Easter Island, looking out to sea and the promise of a limitless horizon. There is no pan leader in the NBA than that belonging to Tim Duncan. "You cannot read the man," says one NBA coach. "He's a mystery, and he likes it that way." Other than those long arms, his abilities are the most obvious things about him. He is stronger than he looks and quicker than he is strong and faster than he is quick. His 22 points, 12 rebounds and 2.5 blocks a game through his first three seasons speak just as loudly as does the fact that Duncan's mere arrival was enough to transform the San Antonio Spurs—and the underachieving David Robinson—into an NBA champion in 1999. He talks no talk, but he walks the whole walk, this one.



# High

Seven feet is eighty-four inches. That's a lot of inches, even in the NBA. Men that tall should not be able to do the things these men can do.

Photographs by CHRISTIAN WITKIN  
Text by CHARLES P. PIERCE



7'2"



5

## Dikembe Mutombo

Once, when he was just beginning at Georgetown, Dikembe Mutombo found himself in one of those godawful NCAA tournament gang-bang interviews that are inevitably a waste of everybody's time, except on those occasions when Bobby Knight channeled Vlad the Impaler. Anyway, Mutombo responded to the first question by pulling a five-minute burst of lyrical, liquid French out of his arsenal of five languages. At the end, a smile fairly gamboling around his lips, he looked out over the stupefied scribes. "Oh, I am sorry," he said. "I did not know you did not speak French." He's always been the most exotic one, even in this gathering of very tall men, only one of whom (Rashheed Wallace) was born in the United States. Mutombo's game is almost purely defense, and, since he's thirty-four now, it's bound to stay that way. He's blocked nearly four shots a game during his nine years in the NBA. He's also taken on the myriad causes of his homeland, Congo, as well as the rest of Africa. And he's never lost a bit of that off-kilter wit and overall *je ne sais quoi* with which he treats a world that sometimes doesn't know *quoi* to do with it.



6'11"



5

## Rasheed Wallace

A most seven feet of pure platinum, Rasheed Wallace has always moved in too many directions at once. After Dean Smith fairly shoved him out the door at North Carolina, he spent one long year in Washington, where he failed to live up to a single

ounce of his promise and was subsequently peddled posthaste to Portland. Last season, finally a twenty-five-year-old Wallace managed to go in three or four of the right directions at once. He put up 16 points and 7 rebounds per game and made the All-Star team, but, most important, he became an unguardable

problem and a 52 percent shooter off the Blazers' bench. It is a role in which he ought to become most comfortable.

However, he's also been thrown out of eight games in the past two years. Listen closely. Is something ticking?



7'0"



5

## Hakeem Olajuwon

He first hit the Final Four with the University of Houston in 1982, a raw talent from Nigeria, and he absolutely could not have caught the ball with an apple bucket. The next year, graceful and stunningly complete, Hakeem Olajuwon tore up the college game to the point that he was picked first in the 1984 NBA draft. (Some third-year shooting guard from North Carolina went third that year.) He is an exquisite athlete, a master of all the lost arts of the low post—the drop step, the swoop across the lane, and especially the delicate, lovely fadeaway jump shot that fell often enough for Olajuwon and the Rockets to win two consecutive championships during the Jordan Abdication of 1994–95. His body is breaking down a bit now as he closes in on 30,000 career points, he's played only 341 games in the past three seasons. Hell, at thirty-seven, he may not ever get there. But he's already come so very far.



7'0"

5



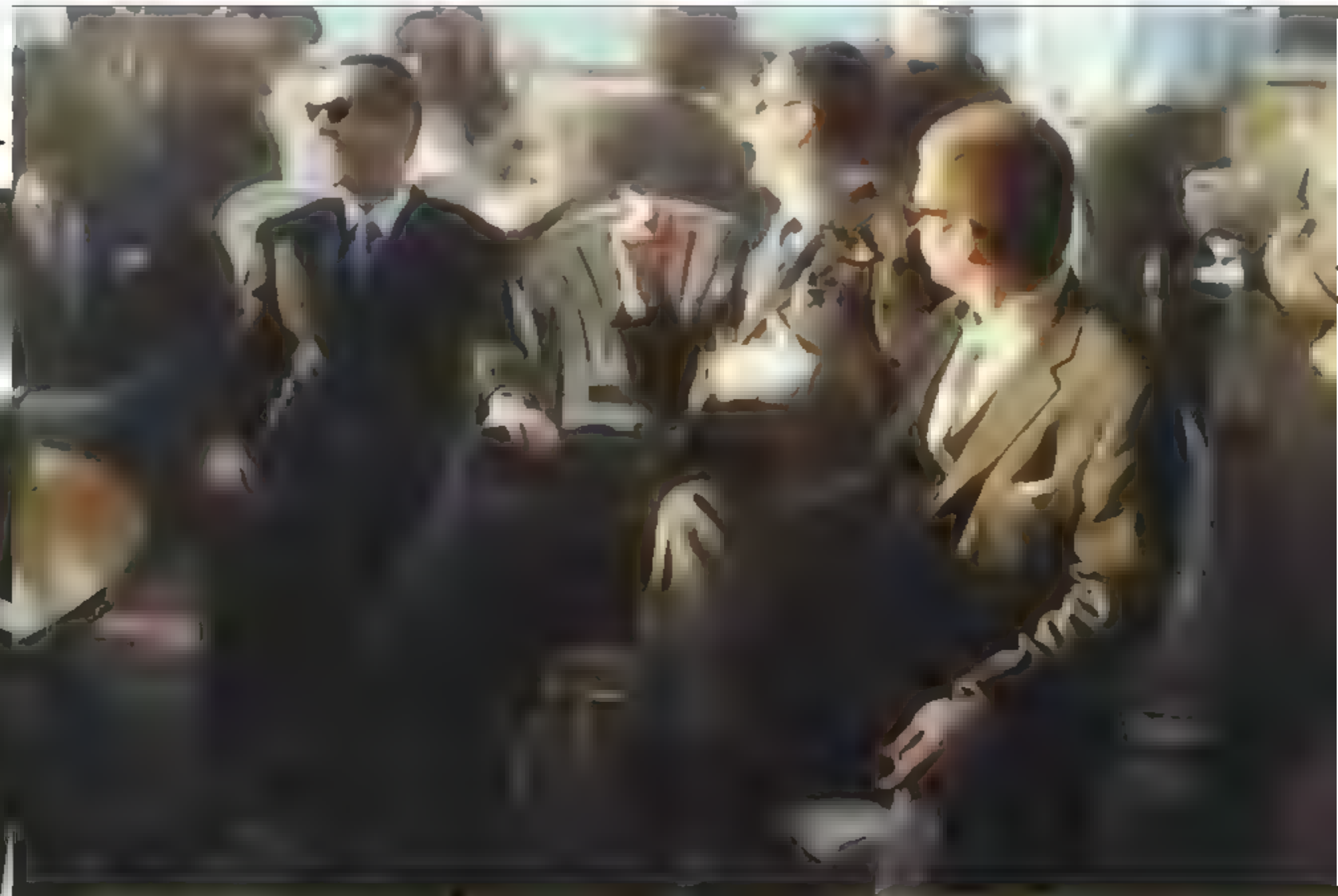
## Patrick Ewing

There once were high school kids in gorilla suits. There once were college students who threw bananas at him. There once were superannuated radio hosts in New York who used him as a Rastus doll. Patrick Ewing has spent his entire public career as a lightning rod for some of the worst impulses of our society. There is no active athlete with more history hanging on him, and that he ends his career now in Seattle, as a thirty-eight-year-old brooding presence, is a cooperative tragedy.

Nonetheless, he is a towering figure in the middle of basketball's first century—the bridge from Russell and Chamberlain to Duncan and O'Neal. His pivot game has been ground up a bit within his shattered legs, but he'll still grab a rebound and stick it back, and he's become a great jump-shooter—the black Jack Sikma, finishing up with the team on which Sikma himself got a ring.



# The Ties and Suits and Shirts That Bind



Though that June wedding seems far-off, any bride can tell you that now is the time to do your planning. For the men in the party—and, of course, the groom-to-be—that means what to wear.

Photographs by Steven Sebring

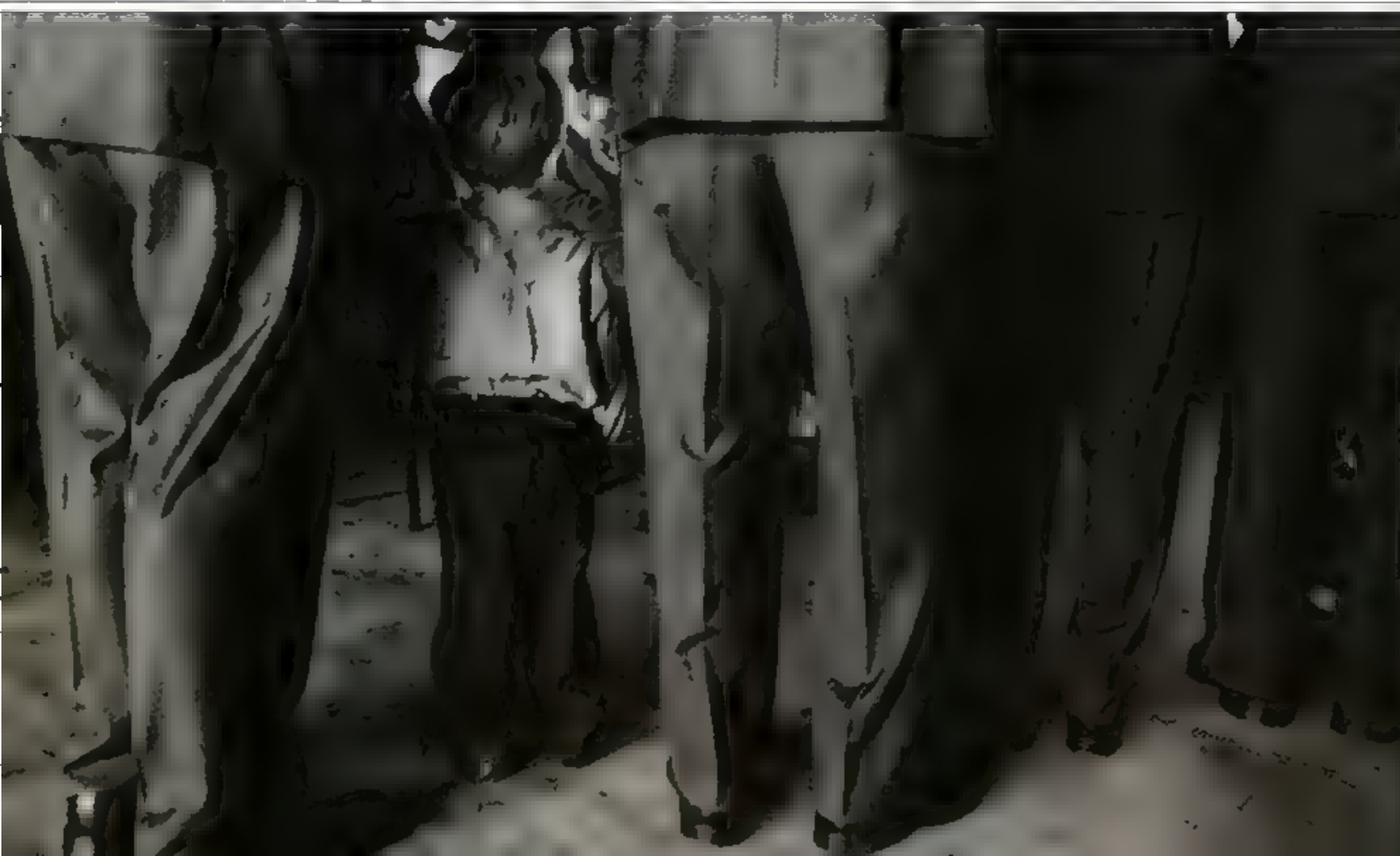
When the big day came for Liam Beardslee and Jolie Newman, there were a lot of things to worry about. Fortunately, looking good was not one of them. On Mal Ward, the best man, left: Wool suit (\$1,095) by Corneliani, cotton shirt (\$125) and silk tie (\$85) by Thomas Pink, leather shoes (\$100) by Bostonian. On Liam, right: Wool suit (\$2,150) by Ermenegildo Zegna, cotton shirt (\$125) and silk tie (\$85) by Thomas Pink, silk pocket square (\$65) by Robert Talbott. Weddings can be formal but not funereal. Try punching up a proper gray suit with a smart pastel-colored shirt and tie. On Paul Kelly, left: Wool suit (\$3,000) by Gianfranco Ferré, cotton shirt (\$145) and silk tie (\$95) by Corneliani, leather lace-ups (\$145) by Johnston & Murphy. On Brian Parkhi, right: Three-piece wool-and-mohair suit (\$1,295), Polo by Ralph Lauren, wool-and-mohair shirt (\$175) by Turnbull & Asser, silk tie (\$130) by Ermenegildo Zegna, silk pocket square (\$65) by Robert Talbott, leather lace-ups (\$145) by Johnston & Murphy.





**ABOVE** It's always been a tradition to have the groom and his groomsmen dress similarly—that they can do it in sharp shirts and suits preserves that tradition while keeping everyone from looking like headwaiters. On David Fuhrer: Four-button single-breasted wool-blend suit (\$475) by Perry Ellis Portfolio, cotton shirt (\$175) by Turnbull & Asser, silk tie (\$85) by Thomas Pink. **BELOW** The man in the gray suit doesn't have to blend into the background. These single-breasted suits with a more Continental ventless jacket ensure that he won't. Wool suits by Tommy Hilfiger.

Like the suits, this shirt and tie have more going on than their solid colors suggest. Textures and weaves on both give a greater sense of depth to the fabrics. On Evan Lobb: Three-button single-breasted wool suit (\$1,850) by Salvatore Ferragamo, cotton shirt (\$165) by Luciano Moresco, silk tie (\$53) by Brooks Brothers. **BELOW** It's a big day—you're more than entitled to take a nip to calm your nerves. Three-button single-breasted wool suit (\$1,500) by Vestimenta, cotton shirt (\$125) and silk tie (\$85) by Thomas Pink, silk pocket square (\$65) by Robert Talbott.





Jolie and Liam didn't want some Merchant-Ivory wedding that was perfect to the point of being sterile. "It was very laid-back," noted Liam, "and there was a good sense of humor throughout. I'm six four and Jolie's five one, so when it came time to stand at the altar, she was on a phone book." Three-button single-breasted wool suit (\$2,150) by Ermenegildo Zegna, cotton shirt (\$125) and silk tie (\$85) by Thomas Pink, silk pocket square (\$65) by Robert Talbott.



A single button suit, like this one, is more formal than a three- or two-button. Combining it with a silver-toned tie only makes it more dashing. On Paul Westlake: Single-button single-breasted wool suit (\$1,845) by Armani Collezione, cotton shirt (\$155) by Salvatore Ferragamo, silk tie (\$130) by Ermenegildo Zegna, silk pocket square (\$65) by Robert Talbott. For store information see page 131. Production and casting by Dale Gonzalez for DeWitt & Carver. Styling by Dominic Albo. Grooming by Amy-Marie Yurkavica.

FOR STYLE TIPS, NEWS, AND TOOLS PLUS OUR PICKS OF THE COOLEST NEW CLOTHES AND WHERE TO FIND THEM VISIT ESQUIRE.COM/STYLE



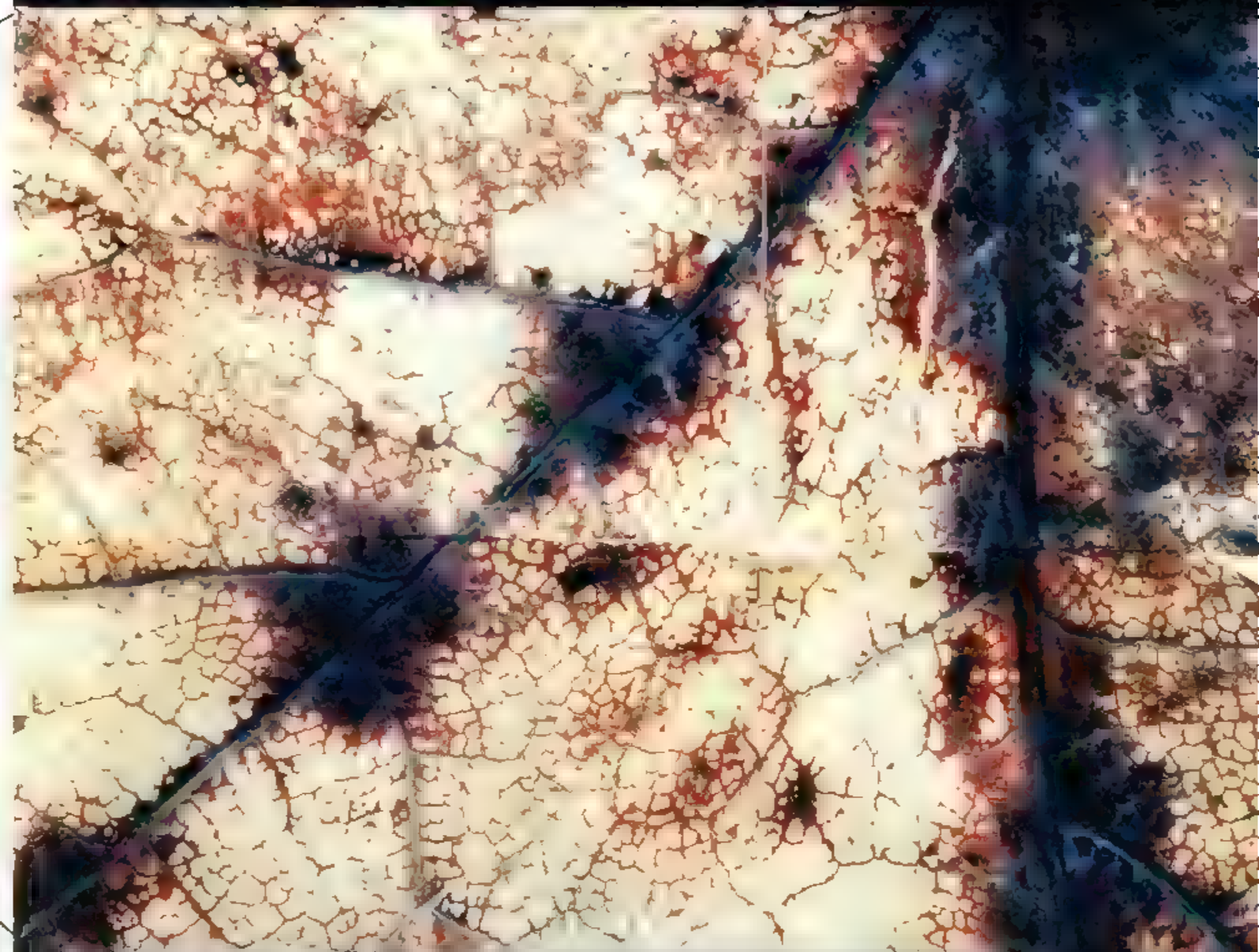
# WHAT IS A PANDEMIC?

If you're a man between thirty and fifty, there's a one-in-twenty chance you have

## HEPATITIS C.

And as for a cure, there isn't one. Most times, there aren't even symptoms until it's too late. Ten thousand Americans will die from it this year. That's what a pandemic is.

87 100 457 12 0 // ARTWORK BY DOUG AND MIKE STARN



### What Is It?

A friend of mine who has been battling hepatitis C for more than two years recently described his microbial nemesis as "a disease that doesn't even do you the courtesy of letting you know that it's killing you. It's a ghost." Having talked with numerous virologists who have been struggling to understand the insidious bug that has infected four million Americans—four times the number that AIDS has—I think that's still about the best description I've heard. ¶ Hepatitis C is an adroit chameleon. It is able to disguise itself from the immune system by mutating—instantaneously, serially, endlessly—a skill that makes it treacherously asymptomatic and very difficult to treat. (Symptoms are a by-product of immune-system response. Because a virus in disguise is not responded to, there are no noticeable symptoms.) ¶ The typical hepatitis-C patient is a middle-aged man in seemingly good health whose liver-function tests suddenly turn up irregular. After further tests, he learns that he has been under attack for between two and three decades—surreptitious activity by a virus that he might have picked up from a shared cocaine straw back in '79. If he's lucky, this discovery will be cause for nothing more than mild consternation. But if he's not, it will presage news that his hepatitis has led to cirrhosis and that he may one day need someone else's liver to stay alive. Further, this man isn't necessarily a member of the "infectious underclass"—junkies, prostitutes, and prisoners—that always seems to suffer the brunt of such epidemics. He could be a stockbroker who picked up the disease from a blood transfusion he had after knee surgery back in the eighties or



a young musician who got a tattoo to keep up with his peers

All of this has made the hepatitis-C virus, in the words of American Liver Foundation president Alan Brownstein, "the most serious disease of the twenty-first century in terms of mortality." That may be a bit of an exaggeration—cancer and heart disease still kill far more Americans than hep C does each year—but there's no question that as infectious diseases go, it is the most stealthy and lethal to come along since AIDS. Because it proceeds to a chronic phase in 85 percent of infections, hepatitis C has already become the world's leading cause of liver disease, including cancer and liver transplants. And here is the cruel math of transplantation: More than sixteen thousand people currently await new livers, fewer than five thousand transplants have taken place in the past year. The bottom line is, hep C now kills about ten thousand people per year in the U.S., a number that is expected to double in the next decade.

And that will make hepatitis C more lethal than AIDS.

## Isn't Hepatitis A the Big Deal? Get from Drinking Dirty Water

THAT'S HEPATITIS A, or what used to be called infectious hepatitis, because it spreads so easily and rapidly. Hep A is almost the mirror opposite of hep C. While hepatitis C is blood borne, the hep-A virus is contracted either by consuming fecally contaminated food or water or by simply being in close physical contact with someone who is infected with it. Its symptoms—nausea, fever, fatigue, jaundice—usually appear quickly and dramatically and never proceed beyond the acute phase, meaning it is always resolved within six months of infection. Hepatitis A is considered the most benign of the three main hepatitis viruses because it doesn't cause permanent damage to the liver and an effective vaccine has been developed for it.

Hepatitis C is more similar in disposition to hepatitis B—the other common hepatitis virus—with a couple of important differences. Hep B can and does mature to chronicity, but it does so in only 10 to 15 percent of cases; hep C becomes chronic 85 percent

of the time. And while hep B can be transmitted by blood, it also can be spread by other body fluids, such as saliva and semen, which are not proven transmitters of hepatitis C. Though hep B tends to hang on longer than hep A, it usually succumbs to the body's immune system or antiviral agents or both. Most important, as with hepatitis A, there is a vaccine that can prevent hepatitis B.

Though hep C is often compared to HIV, they have little in common. The virus that causes AIDS attacks the body's immune system; hepatitis C attacks the liver. Whereas full-blown-AIDS patients know they are sick and show their symptoms demonstrably, hep C patients feel fine and might not show a single symptom until they are past help. Finally, as shocking an ambush as HIV was on the American public-health system, it turned out to have a decipherable etiology. After its bolt to prominence in the early eighties, HIV was discovered to have germinated in primates in certain regions of Africa before infecting humans and migrating to Europe and the U.S. through an easily identifiable and frighteningly common activity—unprotected sex—in the seventies. Hep C, on the other hand, has much more cryptic beginnings.

THERE ARE REFERENCES TO JAUNDICE, the yellowing of the eyes and skin associated with hepatitis (caused more by the A and B strains than by C), as far back as Hippocrates. But hepatitis B wasn't discovered until 1967, A in 1973, and C not until 1989. Before its discovery, this third major strain of the virus was known enigmatically as non-A, non-B hepatitis—a bug that seemed to infect patients who'd had blood transfusions. Since many of the earliest victims had served in World War II, during which blood transfusions were first performed on a pervasive basis, some scientists surmised that the virus might have spread as a result of surgeries performed during that war. That's still as good an explanation as any, and the virus could have been around for much longer and simply found a convenient new vector in blood transfusions. In fact, some experts believe that hepatitis C may be the oldest of the hepatitis bugs, because its wiliness suggests a longer

period spent trying to outwit the human immune system.

Even after virologists from the Centers for Disease Control and scientists at the San Francisco biotech company Chiron Corporation actually delineated most elements of the non-A, non-B genome and named it hepatitis C in 1989, it took another three years to devise and implement an effective screening test to protect the nation's blood supply. Meanwhile, thousands more unsuspecting surgery patients were being infected with hep-C-tainted blood.

HEP C SEEMS TO BE PASSED by blood-to-blood contact only. (While the virus has been isolated in other body fluids, such as saliva and semen, researchers just don't know yet whether it can be passed by them.) Exact percentages are hard to pin down, but up to 60 percent of infections are caused by the sharing of dirty needles for intravenous drug use. Another 10 to 20 percent are believed to be caused by other forms of incidental blood transference—body piercing and tattooing, manicures and pedicures, a shared razor blade or toothbrush, a straw used to snort cocaine, or sex that includes blood-to-blood contact. Between 5 and 10 percent of present infections are due to transfusions of tainted blood that took place prior to 1992. And remarkably, 10 percent of infections occur in people who have never engaged in "at risk" behaviors, meaning either that there are a good number of truly idiopathic infections—those of unknown origin—or that people are lying about their lifestyles. It is probably some of both.

## Is Hep C Yet Another Reason Not to Have Sex?

BECAUSE THE HEP-C EPIDEMIC conjures memories of AIDS in its early days, it has been assumed that the disease can be transmitted by sexual activity. But the facts are not so clear. Some experts say that up to 15 percent of hep-C infections are caused by sexual relations with an infected person. But others doubt that sex is responsible for many cases at all and do not consider it a

sexually transmitted disease because the active virus does not appear to be transmitted by any fluid other than blood.

This much we know: Study after study has shown that an infected person in a monogamous relationship almost never transmits the disease to his partner. On the other hand, sex with multiple partners—especially those with a history of sexually transmitted disease—or, of course, sex involving blood-to-blood contact, raises the odds of infection. To be on the safe side, a National Institutes of Health panel on the disease strongly recommended that the same safe-sex protections be observed for hep C as for AIDS.

## What's Hep C Done for Me All Those Years I Didn't Know I Had It?

HEPATITIS C HAS TWO PHASES—acute and chronic—and neither features prominent symptoms. It begins when an offending microbe—a single strand of viral RNA with an attached protein encased in a shell composed of more viral proteins—enters the body through the bloodstream, swims to the liver, and attaches itself to the outer coating of a hepatocyte, a liver cell. Scientists aren't entirely sure how, but the virus then eases its way into the interior of the cell, where it attracts the attention of the immune system. Over a period of years, even decades, the "friendly fire" of the immune system will destroy healthy cells and begin the process of fibrosis, or liver scarring, and, eventually, cirrhosis, the death of liver cells and disruption of organ function.

The acute phase lasts approximately six to eight weeks, and during that time only 25 to 35 percent of patients suffer any symptoms, even those who do could easily mistake them for a twenty-four-hour flu: an upset stomach, feverishness, perhaps some fatigue. Rarer but more distinctive symptoms such as a rash or jaundice may hint that you have something other than the flu. Elevated enzyme levels on blood tests performed during a typical physical exam may also suggest that you've contracted the virus. But most often, the acute phase of the disease will come and go without your ever knowing you were sick.

If you're among the lucky 15 percent whose virus does not

**By Anonymous** Your one-year fight begins the moment the nurse teaches you how to fill your syringe. The irony is the joke. Needles are how you got here in the first place. Thirty years ago, filled with rage and self-loathing but unable to understand why, you acted out. You were for long hair, dropping out, freedom, sharing—and junk. It doesn't matter that you wised up and quit in the spring of 1973. No, when you are told that you are going to pay a penalty for your ancient mistakes, you are stunned. After all, your life is so different now. You found your way. You started a business. You consulted with the most successful leaders in business, media, politics, sports, and Hollywood. You make good money, own two homes, have a beautiful, deeply intelligent wife and a one-year-old boy.

Back in 1995, your doctor told you that you had hepatitis C. He also told you not to worry, that, in the vast majority of cases, hep C shows up and is never heard from again. But then in late 1997, you had a blood test that showed the level of the viral intruder to be high. The next day, your doctor called you at the office.

"You need to start treatment now," he told you.

"What?" you said, the room tilting on its axis. "I thought you said this was nothing and that the treatment doesn't really work."

"If you don't start, you have four years..." and you don't hear him finish his sentence. Then, the obsession begins. Your biopsy shows your liver is being eaten away. Fibrosis, they call it, whatever the hell that means. You delay the start of treatment to prepare mentally, and to begin notifying your family and business associates.

The first shot, which you take in the abdomen, causes a fever of 104 degrees, cold sweats, the whole bit. Interferon (which you inject three times a week) and ribavirin (a tablet you take six times a day) both cause severe anemia. Ribavirin is so toxic that your wife can't touch the tablets for fear of miscarriages. They said you'd be fatigued, pale, winded, chilled. They said you'd be irritable, withdrawn, anxious, depressed. They said you'd have no appetite. They were right.

And so you begin living by a countdown: 365 days, 156 shots.

You thought you were tough. I won't need medication for any psychological side effects. I'll be able to sleep, concentrate, make love, and keep my fourteen-hour-per-day schedule. I'll be able to juggle five things at once. You were wrong. For the first three months, you are in the office a lot less because you are at home, sitting in the corner of your room, lights off, jumpy and spent. You cry out loud, but only by yourself. You don't want to show your wife you are weak.

You were never a joiner, but you find yourself sitting in on a hep-C support group. The room is filled with laborers, Vietnam vets, mothers. Their skin is drained of color. They drink great quantities of Gatorade and Poland Spring. They talk about suicide. They talk about insomnia. They say you won't survive without sleeping pills and antidepressants.

So you go see your old shrink, and he prescribes the meds. Suddenly, your life is governed by a new schedule: Tylenol, ribavirin, interferon, Ambien, and Zoloft. After a week of this, you want to quit. Nothing is worth this kind of misery. Only when you go back to the support group again, you see that the quitters are dying.

You decide to work longer hours. Maybe that will be a healthy distraction. You hop on planes to L.A., Detroit, Chicago, your interferon and needles by your side, packed in dry ice. Your chemotherapy kit—a blue bag with a yellow smiley face—is designed to make you feel good, but every time you look at it, you want to puke.

One of the first things they tell you is to never miss a shot. But the shots are what cause the rashes, the dry skin, the peeling scalp, the itching, coughing, and sneezing, the constant shortness of breath. One day in the park, you chase your young son as he runs up and down the hills. You can't catch up to him, and you panic, too embarrassed to ask for help. You finally reach him, hug him, and when you get home, you curse your wife, your in-laws, your friends.

"Where are you?" you scream. "Why aren't you here to help me?"

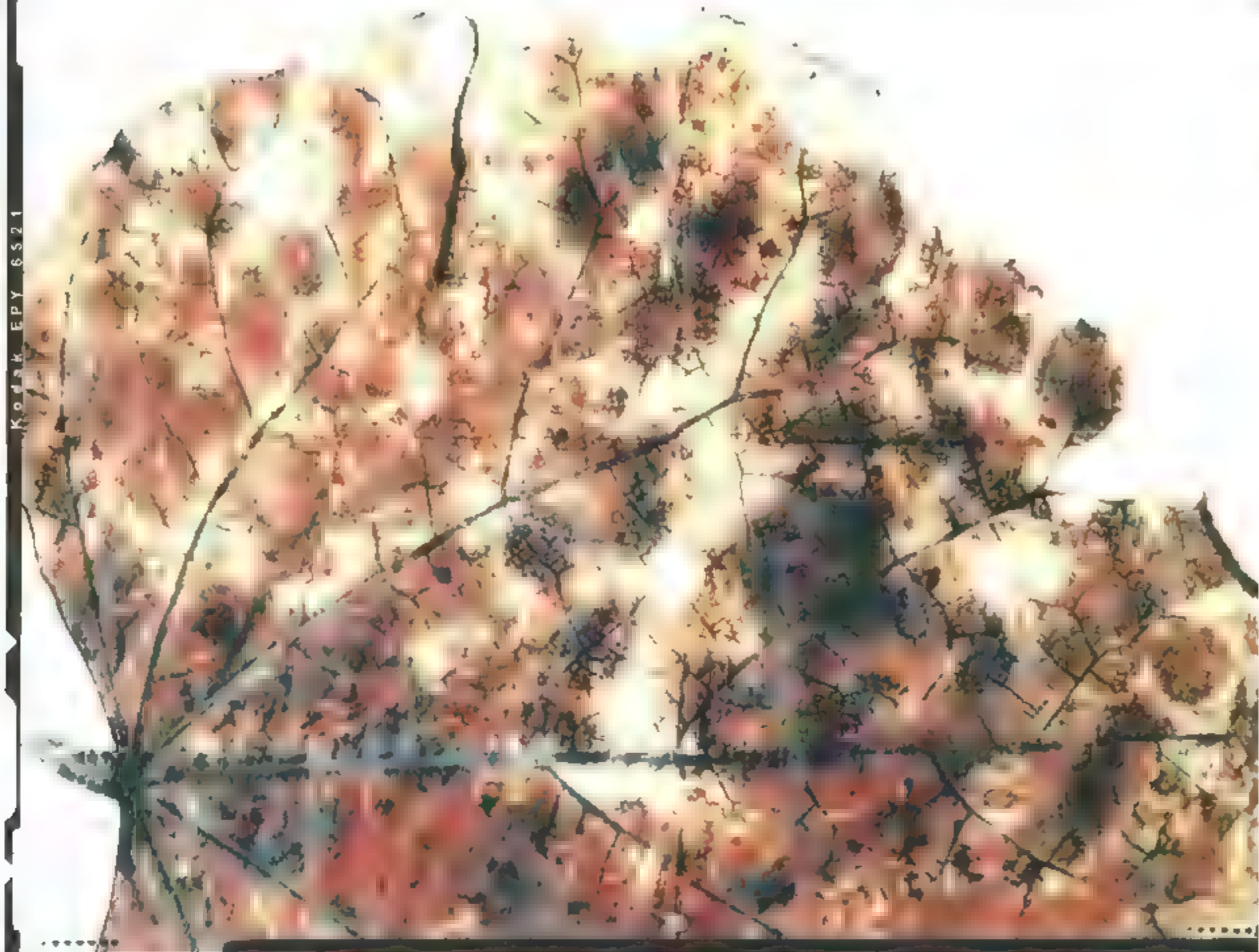
And that's how it goes. Little by little, you distance yourself from everyone. One friend, upset that you haven't returned his calls, tells you that "everybody has problems." Self-absorbed, yes. But he isn't wrong.

As your one-year sentence winds down—ninety days, thirty-nine shots to go now—you begin to see some light. Your business is holding on—tenuously. Your body is functioning—barely. Your marriage is intact—amazingly. But your wife has been scarred. You can't really remember how happy you were together before all this.

Two months from the end, when things should be getting easier, you can't breathe. Laid up with double pneumonia. You can't make it up the stairs. You need rest, so you tell your wife that it is best for her and the boy to go away for Christmas. And when they go away, you hate yourself for selling the two people who love you.

The day the treatment ends in January, you take the boxes of interferon and you stomp on them. Tears stream down your face. They say it takes four to six weeks for the poison to leave your system, but after just two weeks, you feel good. You go to San Francisco on business. One evening, you walk back to your hotel, uphill. You aren't out of breath. You don't need to stop to rest. You phone your wife and like a little boy, you say, "I walked up these hills. I wasn't tired." She is putting the baby to sleep. You are ready to wake up.





When a patient with AIDS nation knows that he is gravely ill and shows no symptoms, he is often told that he is not infected. A patient with hepatitis C, on the other hand, might not know he is infected until he has been so badly damaged that a transplant is the only option.

progress to a chronic phase, what you never knew won't hurt you. If your disease becomes chronic, however, hepatitis C can be fatal. About 80 percent of chronic hep-C sufferers don't experience any symptoms after the acute phase, either; the virus seems to invade, take up residence in the liver, and promptly go to sleep. But if you're in the other 20 percent and the disease is quietly eating away at your liver, you could be grievously ill before you know you're infected. Even cirrhosis can be maddeningly silent in its early stages. But eventually it will cause pain, jaundice, water retention, bloating, and mental disorientation.

**PROBABLY. BUT GIVEN HEP C'S** deviousness, no one can be blamed for the fact that we didn't have an adequate screening test until 1992. You have to wonder, though, why once the test was

in place and potentially tainted blood supplies could be identified, those who'd received blood transfusions before 1992 weren't notified as quickly as possible.

The problem—as with most public-health fiascos, is that there is no single culprit. The bottom line is that in 1997, the National Institutes of Health recommended that a formal look-back process be initiated to identify and inform as many of those who could have been exposed through pre-1992 blood transfusions as possible. Congress subsequently ordered such a process, and a year later, hospitals and blood banks began sending letters to thousands of people who might have received transfusions of hep-C-tainted blood and needed to be screened for the virus. Better late than never, but those who were actually carrying the infection had lost at least five years off their diagnosis and treatment. In many cases, one has to assume that this delay literally proved fatal.

A good chunk of those who might have been transfused with tainted blood have by now been identified, and Surgeon General David Satcher is about to unleash a nationwide direct-mail

dump, advising America of the existence of hepatitis C, its warning signs, at-risk behaviors, et cetera. Still, as pandemics go, hep C continues to fly mostly under the radar.

## HOW DO I KNOW I HAVE IT?

**ONE HEP-C SUFFERER I KNOW** likes to say that members of the baby-boom generation could have contracted the disease “just by being alive during the seventies.” But seriously, you need to review not only your medical history but your drug-use and sexual histories as well. Not very pleasant, but doing a little soul searching now might make you more likely to take action when a symptom shows up or when your liver-function-test numbers look suspicious.

If you have done things that might put you at risk, keep an eye out not only for symptoms but for elevated enzyme levels on the liver series your doc runs when you get a physical. As hepatitis C kills liver cells, enzymes called transaminases leak from the liver cells into the bloodstream and thus will show up at higher levels. This is no sure bet, however, since elevated enzyme levels can also result from having had one too many drinks the night before, and roughly one third of people with hep C consistently display normal transaminase levels throughout their infections.

If you have a risk factor in your past and you have elevated enzyme levels, get tested. Your doctor may recommend something called an ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay). This test, used to protect the nation's blood supply from hep C, measures the amount and type of hep-C antibodies in your bloodstream. But you should know that it has been known to produce false-positive diagnoses between 30 and 70 percent of the time. What you should do instead is demand a RIBA (recombinant immunoblot assay) which will cost you more but is believed to be more accurate.

If your tests are running positive, your doctor should try one of a couple of additional tests to measure your viral load—the number of bugs you have in your system—and to assess the seriousness of your infection. You should also ask him to run a genetic test (such as the PCR) to identify which of the six hep-C genotypes you are infected with. Some studies have suggested that the genotype of your virus—its specific genetic makeup—influences the severity of the infection and how responsive it will be to treatment.

But even with all that paperwork in hand, all you're really going to know is that (a) you have hep C, (b) you have a relatively high or low load of the virus in your system, and (c) you have an aggressive or benign genotype of the microbe. You're not really going to know how truly sick you are until you obtain a biopsy, which will tell how much damage, if any, has been done to your liver. The good news about a liver biopsy is that it can be done as an outpatient procedure. The bad news is that it involves the use of a needle about the length of a fencing saber.

## WILL IT GO ON? THEN I HAVE IT OR I HAVE IT CHRONIC

**DEVELOPING A CURE** for hep C has proven as difficult as diagnosing the disease in the first place. The problem is compounded by the fact that hep C has yet to be cultured outside the human body, a key to the development of effective medications for diseases. (Treatments for pox and AIDS weren't possible until scientists could reproduce the viruses in the lab.)

Still, it's not as much of a lost cause as it once was. If you re-

## PARANOIA CHECKLIST YOU SHOULD BE WORRIED IF

- » You are a middle-aged man. Two-thirds of hep-C infections occur among thirty- to fifty-year-olds.
- » You received a blood transfusion before 1992—whether you got a letter from a blood bank or hospital or not.
- » You have ever shared a needle while using intravenous drugs or a straw while snorting cocaine.
- » You have had tattooing or body piercing performed on you.
- » You have a history of promiscuous sex, particularly with partners who may have been carrying a sexually transmitted disease.
- » You work in the health or public-safety industry, particularly if you run the daily risk of being exposed to an infectee's blood.
- » You are black or hispanic. If so, you are about twice as likely to be infected with the disease.

diagnosed with the virus, your course of treatment is going to depend on your viral load and what damage, if any, has been done to your liver. If you have a low viral load and no liver fibrosis, your doc will probably recommend “watchful waiting” coupled with some severe lifestyle discipline. You'll have to stop drinking for obvious reasons and possibly adjust your diet to make life easier for your liver. If you catch the disease before it's damaged your liver, you could be in for little more than a life of being mildly paranoid about your enzyme levels.

If cirrhosis is detected by a liver biopsy, your main treatment option is going to be something called Rebetron, a “cocktail” consisting of two powerful antiviral agents, interferon and ribavirin. Interferon is a naturally occurring substance called a cytokine that has been used as a cancer chemotherapy for years. Until the mid-nineties, it alone was used to treat the infection, with unimpressive results—only 20 percent cures and a high relapse rate. In 1996, the drug company Schering-Plough began experimenting with pairing ribavirin, another antiviral chemical, with interferon to boost its infection-fighting capabilities. It is hardly a magic bullet, but it has doubled the success rate to 30 to 40 percent—“success” meaning that in several studies, a full protocol of the medication has eliminated the virus for a period of at least six months after termination of treatment. If this can be accomplished before the cirrhosis has gone too far, the liver has a very good chance of completely regenerating itself. (In the most recent study, a newer form of interferon, coupled with ribavirin, achieved success rates ranging from 54 to 61 percent. This treatment has not yet been approved by the FDA but may well be available in about a year.)

The relative success of these therapies, combined with more frequent and earlier diagnoses of the virus and its purging from the nation's blood supply, has led some doctors to opine that hep C may not be the pandemic it's been cracked up to be.

But it's foolhardy to get too smug with microbes. Remember that Rebetron still doesn't work for a majority of the disease's victims, and that even those who clear the virus do so at a considerable cost—monetary and otherwise. Rebetron can cost up to \$9,000 for a six-month protocol. And interferon is notorious for its punishing side effects (see sidebar, “A Survivor's Story”). Remember, too, that while purification of the blood supply and better public understanding of the dangers of intravenous drug use have diminished the number of new infections, there are still thirty thousand unsuspecting victims who catch hep C each year—and few of them will know about it for years, or even decades. By then, it may be too late. ■





IT'S WITH THE BAND

IT'S WITH THE BAND

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILL STEFF



«Ostrich» The Reverso was created in 1931 to address the needs of polo players, who needed a face that could be flipped inward to protect the crystal from shattering. In keeping with the sporting tradition, the ostrich strap's natural imperfections make it more appropriate for everyday and casual wear. Stainless-steel watch with ostrich strap and folding buckle (\$4,600) by Jaeger-LeCoultre.

Those who have to keep track of the opening of the Paris bourse as well as the time to pick up their three-year-old from nursery school will find this watch from Chopard a godsend. The two quartz movements can be set separately, so more than one time zone can be just a wrist flick away. Eighteen karat gold watch with crocodile strap (\$3,100) by Chopard.





>> ~ you have to meet someone (or, say, breakfast at Tiffany's, what watch would be more appropriate to ensure that you're not late? The watch above has a strong, lizard-like shape that evokes the flagship store's architecture: the Swiss-made quartz movement, eighteen-karat gold case, lizard strap, and other luxurious details remind us why the story was called *Breakfast at Whodunnit*. ■ Eighteen-karat gold watch, \$2,950, by Tiffany & Co. ■ The classic addition to any wrist, the Cartier tank watch (opposite, top) has a simple elegance that lends it a more formal appearance, as indeed the tank has been the black-tie timepiece of choice for several decades. Instead of a more rugged and sporty skin, the finely-textured alligator band is in perfect accord with the watch's understated style. ■ Eighteen-karat gold tank watch with alligator strap (\$4,800) by Cartier. ■ The delicate hobnail pattern that adorns the case of Boucheron's Diamant watch (opposite, middle) is so small and intricate that it can be engraved only in gold. The stylish face is matched by a crocodile strap, as well as the unexpected yet welcome convenience of water resistance to thirty meters. ■ Eighteen-karat gold watch with sueded crocodile strap (\$5,900) by Boucheron. ■ Some watchmakers work in silver; others in stainless steel. Piaget works only in eighteen-karat gold and platinum. Its Protocole line of timepieces is available in white or yellow gold, with a range of strap materials (like this all-skin example, opposite, bottom), and uses a modern automatic movement. ■ Eighteen-karat gold automatic watch (\$7,500) by Piaget.





« Only 2.55 millimeters thick and in eighteen-karat gold, this Patek Philippe Gondolo watch harks back to the arid dero years of the 1930s. Water resistant to twenty-five meters and featuring an exquisite mechanical movement, the Gondolo's historic origins are reflected in a striking crocodile strap. Eighteen-karat gold watch with crocodile strap (\$8,850) by Patek Philippe.

» Stainless steel can add a sturdy, machined look to a watch, which can be matched by a hardy alligator strap, as this example from Baume & Mercier left expertly demonstrates. Oh, by the way, don't know the difference between gator and croc? Alligator has larger scales. Stainless-steel watch with alligator strap (\$1,495) by Baume & Mercier. ■ For those in the know and of the wallet, the International Watch Company (IWC) has been making superb watches and other timepieces since 1868. Traditional designs are rendered with the utmost precision and attention to detail. In addition to showing the time in minutes and hours, as well as the day, date, and phases of the moon, this watch center has the distinction of controlling all those functions through a single screw-in crown. Platinum watch with crocodile strap (\$29,995) by IWC. ■ When it comes to using skins in apparel and accessories, the folks over at Hermes know a thing or two. After all, the firm started out as a saddler, only to take on the increasing needs of its clients (bags, blankets, et cetera) in the passing years. Having established a Swiss watchmaking concern in 1978, the Parisian luxury company began to create watches that could live up to the hallowed brand name. The subtle beveled H shape of this case, right, pays tribute to the company's legacy. Stainless-steel watch with alligator strap (\$1,350) by Hermes. For store information, see page 131.



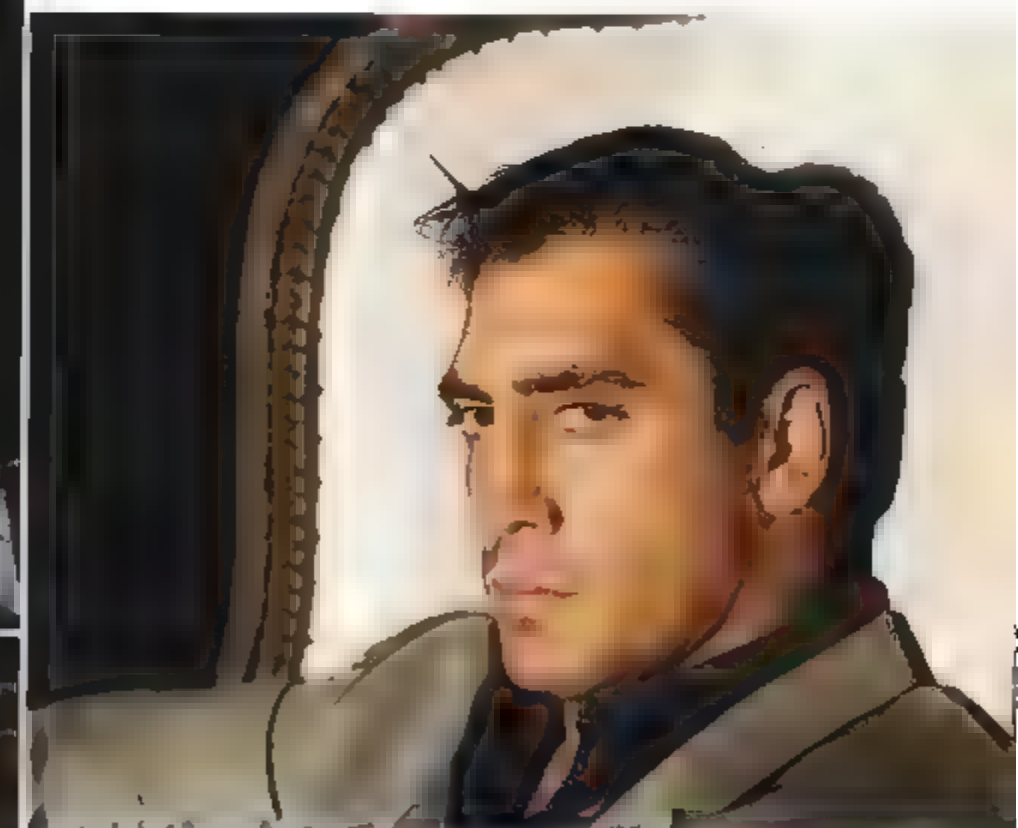
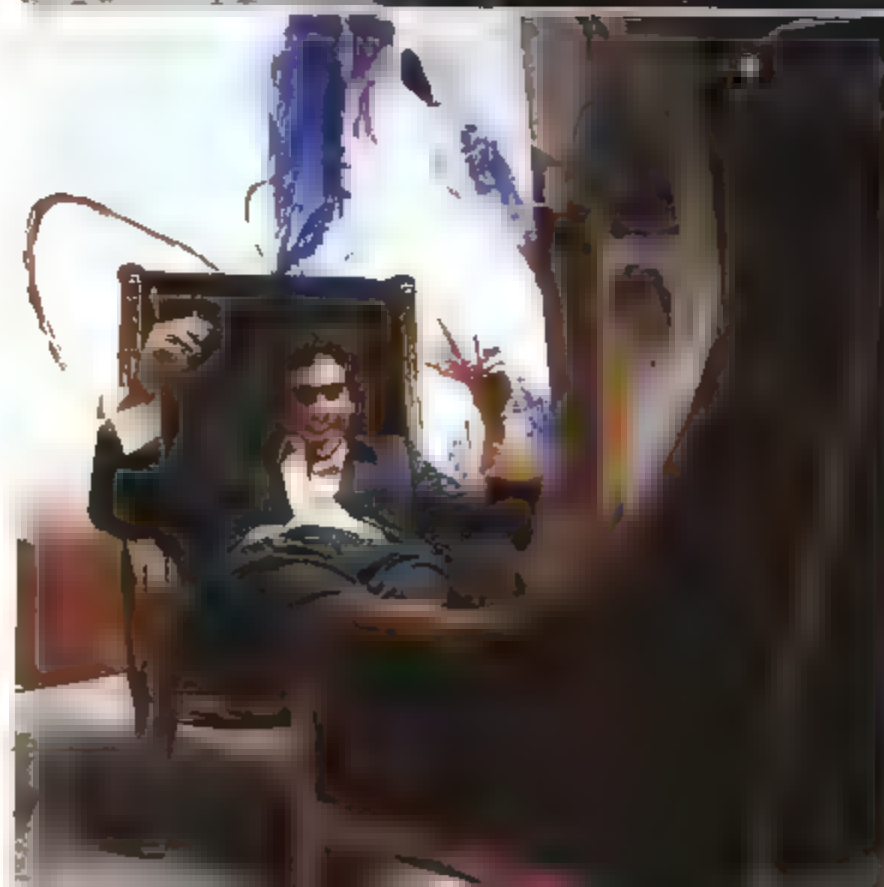
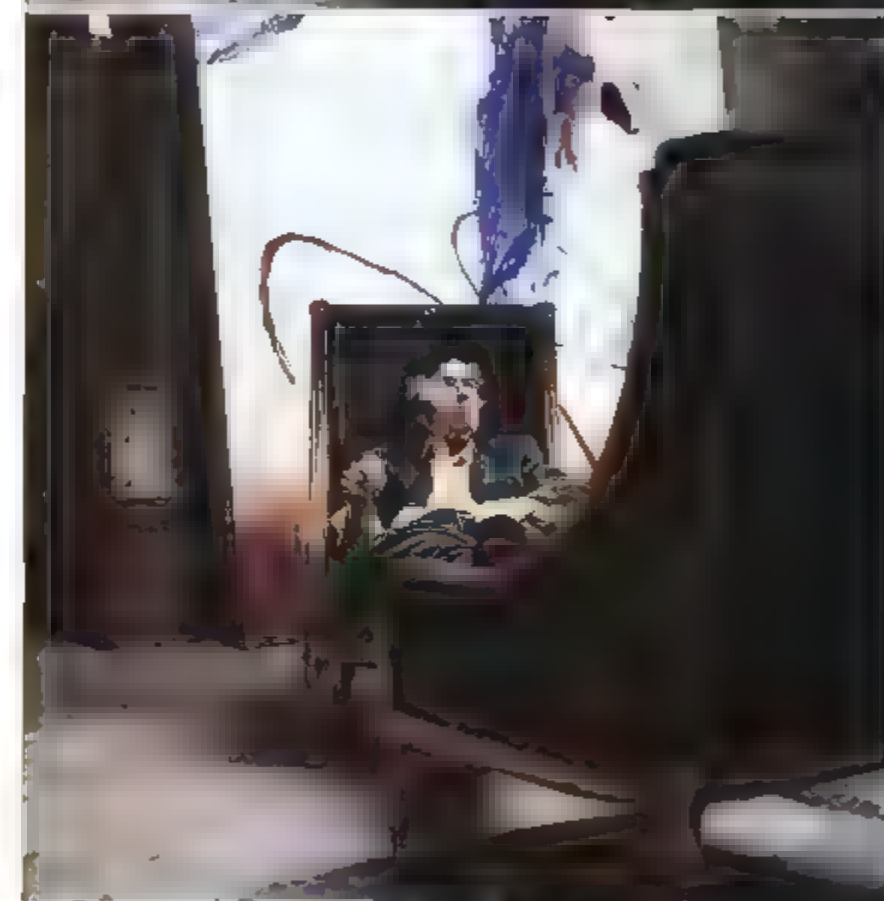
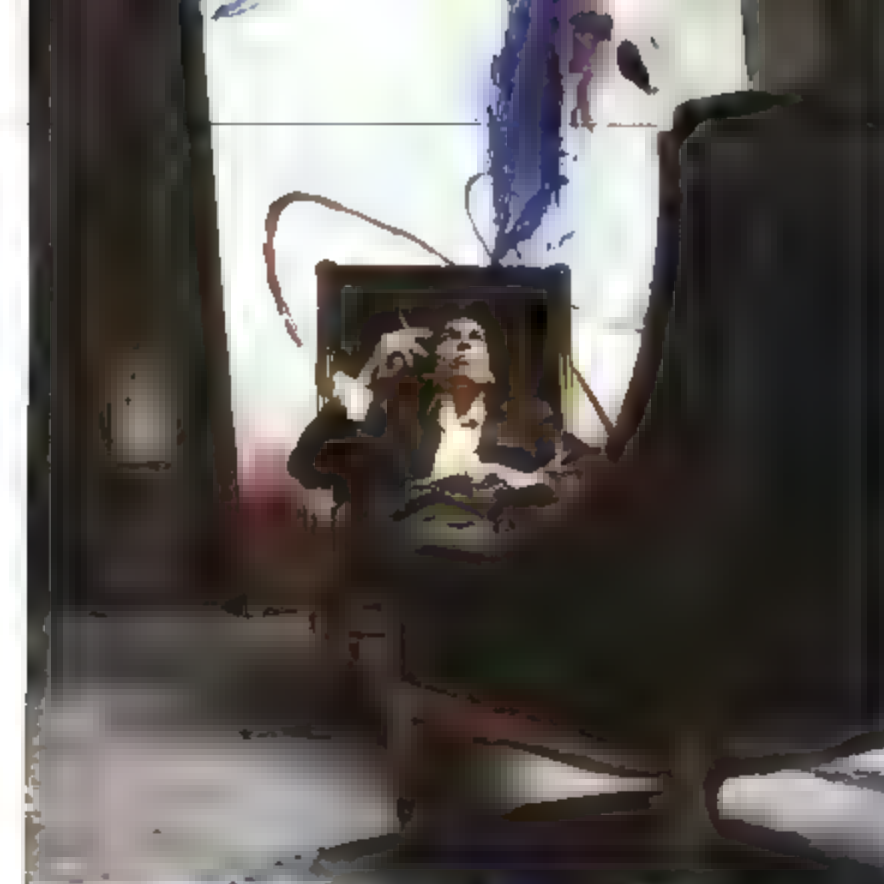


## A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a light-colored suit, stands in front of a large, abstract painting. The painting is dominated by bold red and black strokes. The words "choo choo" are written in a large, black, hand-drawn font across the middle, and "little dog" is written in a similar style at the bottom right. The man is holding a small object to his chin, looking thoughtfully at the camera.

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**Cuban poet and novelist Reinaldo Arenas** once wrote, "It is a shame—really it is, that you can't always live in this fog," a lament that a dream life, however woven and imagined, can't withstand the choking horrors of poverty and persecution. As a gay writer in Castro's revolutionary Cuba, Arenas was hunted, jailed, and eventually exiled to the United States in 1980. Ten years later, penniless and ill with AIDS, he committed suicide in New York City. Spanish actor Javier Bardem (*Jamon Jamon*) gives an electrifying performance as Arenas in the new film *Before Night Falls*, based on Arenas's award-winning memoir and directed by artist Julian Schnabel, who showed his knack for documenting the lives of the beautifully doomed in his first film, *Basquiat*. Italian heartthrob Andrea Di Stefano portrays Pepe Malas, the sexual firebrand who seduces and later betrays Arenas when the writer attempts to flee the country. French actor Olivier Martinez stars as the loyal and demure Lazaro Gomez Carriles, the only true friend of Arenas, who stays with the writer until his death. And Johnny Depp and Sean Penn make cameo appearances in this enrapturing film about a man whose only crime was to create a fog of fantasy and attempt to seek the beauty in things so hideously ugly.

BRYAN MEALE



Spas s i a c t o r J i v e . B a r d e n a b o v e p a y s t a p e s e c e d h u l r e v o l t  
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c o s t a e c o m p l e



BY JOHN H. RICHARDSON

# the opportunist

There is a certain kind of man who, in unspeakable human suffering and chaos, sees an opportunity to make himself rich. Take, for instance, the diamond war of Sierra Leone. Nick Karras couldn't get there fast enough. And just look what happened to him.

Photographs by Robert Cooper





**H**OW MANY BOTTLES OF WINE? How many Irish coffees? And that immense plate of seafood and the jazz band and the two pretty blond waitresses and Stan the bodyguard talking about beating down the gates of love's palace with his purple-headed love monster. It's a cool July night at the Green Dolphin restaurant in Cape Town, South Africa, and Nick Karras has been telling us about his private plane and his polo team and his motorcycle-racing team and his homes in California and London and his real estate development in Barbados and his twenty-two diamond mines and his "family holdings in South America" and the whole story of fishing with his father off the coast of South America all summer long until the old man went down with the boat and thirty men and someday Nick is going to sink his own boat at the very same longitude and latitude—but only after bringing the family back together and buying up the rest of the orchards in Corinth and starting a winery to revive the family tradition. And he orders another bottle of wine and tells us to eat more prawns and detours into a locker-room story about "the twins," those little perpetual-motion machines. And finally he works his way back around to Sierra Leone, the matter at hand, where we are headed next week. With its diamonds and fish and shrimp and farmland and rutile and the most gorgeous coastline all just waiting for someone to reach in and grab it. "The UN isn't gonna take it, the British aren't gonna take it, we know the Sierra Leone army isn't gonna take it," Nick says. "It's gotta be done privately. It's gotta be a business."

We are approaching Nick's dark side. Earlier he was talking about how much the people have suffered and how much he wants to help them and all the computers and medical equipment that he's donated. But now he's in the mood where he says things like, "Think of them as hairless monkeys, it makes them easier to kill." And tells (again) the story of the time that little do-gooder aid-worker girl got on his case about the diamond trade and kept saying, "Don't you know there's blood on those diamonds?" And finally Nick got fed up and told her, "Yeah, but it washes right off."

He loves that line. He laughs and says it again. "Yeah, but it washes right off."

It's probably the wine. Which would also explain why he's waving his hand over the giant seafood plate and insisting that no matter what happens, he's going to carve out his piece of diamond territory and take care of things himself, establish a perimeter and plant the flag for his diamond business, Anaconda Worldwide Ltd. "Somebody's gonna have to do it. I can tell you right now, this little area we're gonna carve out will be done soon."

Nick's bodyguards, Stan and Pete, are both serious warriors, graduates of the British special services with combat experience in battlegrounds from Iraq to Bosnia. His Africa hand, James Pryor, a striking man with long hair and a personal uniform that tends toward green fatigues, was with an elite unit of the South African army before moving to London to do political work for the prime minister he calls "Maggie." So it definitely seems like more than bar talk when the last bottle gets low and Nick starts hinting at mysterious business with someone named Nils, something about a gunship and "a commitment to give him some money to straighten out some stuff."

That's when James leans forward and says, "Let's change the subject. What is a green dolphin, anyway?"

IN THE MORNING Nick throws back six aspirin and comes down to breakfast wearing shorts and a Hugo Boss golf shirt with his silver Dunhill pen slipped sideways between the buttons. Stan hands him an abstract of the bad news. The UN has decreed an embargo on diamonds from Sierra Leone. As of today "Fuck it," Nick

says. "They can't ban shit."

He goes on about it. You can sell diamonds anywhere, sell them in New York or Israel. You can hide a million dollars' worth in a cigarette pack and still have room left for most of the cigarettes. This is just more UN bullshit, like the five hundred blue helmets who were "captured" two months ago, who probably just dropped their weapons and ran into the woods. Because everybody knows "niggers can't fight." But after breakfast he goes right up to his hotel room and hunches over his laptop, skimming the latest reports. The war in Sierra Leone has been dragging on for ten years with no end in sight, a morass of banditry and regional meddling and feckless government troops all tangled around Sierra Leone's national curse: the diamonds lying right there in the dirt, so close to the surface that all it takes to get them is a shovel and a guy with a gun to watch your back. Which is why the UN and various peace organizations came up with the label "blood diamonds" for the stones mined by the rebel armies and started publicity campaigns about how the rebels pack their wounds with cocaine to make them more frenzied and cut hands off children and babies and how they even practice cannibalism—one time, supposedly, the rebels cut slices off some guy's face and ate them while he was still alive. They run that *Cry Freetown* film on CNN all the time, all those horrible images of the rebels shooting up the capital back in 1999, like it's on regular rotation or something. The damn thing's two years old already! And sure there's a bit of war going on right now, but it's really not that bad.

Or so Nick says. Because it's bad for business. Because it's messing with his plan. As I eventually put the story together, he was just shy of fifty, living in southern California with his wife and two kids, when he decided his personal deadline was approaching. So he added up exactly how much he would need to buy a boat at least 140 feet long, plus twenty more feet for a helicopter, plus the helicopter. Then he added a half million a year for operating expenses for thirty years and some more for living expenses and then doubled it. And then he sold everything he owned, his advertising business and home and boat and the family diamond dredges in South America, rolled all the money into a stake, and headed to Africa. He started in Guinea, but there were too many ex-communists shoving their hands into his pockets. Then he discovered Sierra Leone—man, what a country. Gorgeous diamonds. The most beautiful colored diamonds in the world. And the place was wide-open, there for the taking, just waiting for a guy like Nick Karras to come along and milk it. Ever since then he's been racking up the frequent flier miles from Freetown to London to Antwerp to Tel Aviv to New York, spending around half a million to as much as \$2 or \$3 million a trip. For every million he lays out, he makes maybe 150 grand profit. Does everything legally and pays all the fees and taxes and figures it will take him three years to make his number—if he doesn't get killed first. He figures he has an 80 percent chance of that. But what the hell. That's what makes it fun.

Nick closes his laptop and straps on his bulletproof vest. He's going to meet a diamond dealer, he says. "You can't go on this one," he tells me. "A lot of these guys, they don't want anyone to know when they're doing business. They don't even want people to know they're in the business."

Stan and Pete are wearing earpieces. Pete hangs behind, keeping an eye out.

THE NEXT MORNING, Nick spends hours trying to reach Septimus Kai Kai, a former economics professor at a community college outside Washington, D.C., who is now the official spokesman of the president of Sierra Leone. Nick met him a year ago and treated him and his nephew to a trip to the U.S., and they've been close ever since.

He comes to the table frowning. There's no real news, he says. "The professor can't talk on the lines because there are so many people listening."

"Who's listening?"

"You, name it. CIA, Liberians, British. Try the springbok. It's delicious."

NEXT TO EATING AND DRINKING Nick loves telling stories. Like the time he took a step into the jungle with a bag full of money and a bag full of diamonds and bumped right into natives with guns. And another time down in the Ivory Coast when some very sophisticated bandits in suits shadowed them for a couple of days and turned up in the hotel elevator, so his guys hustled him into a stairwell and gave him a gun. "And the deal is that if somebody walks through that door, start shooting, you know?"

"How much money did you have?"

"I don't know, maybe \$3 million. Not much."

Nick's stories go on and on and loop back on one another, weaving variations of Brave White Hunter around his big gut and sagging eye bags, with just enough glints of truth that you start to think Africa really does need guys like him, manly-to-the-moon hustlers with the drive to will their dreams into existence. And when there are gaps in the Nickalogue, James and Stan and Pete throw in stories of their own. James telling about helicopter attacks with the Three Two Battalion and his campaign work with the Inkatha Freedom party and Pete talking about getting stalked by a lion in Thailand and Stan—in the most droll Irish accent imaginable—throwing

**"The country is just there for the taking," Nick says. "A hundred guys and a pair of gunships and you could clean off that jungle in two weeks. A month tops. It wouldn't even cost that much." When Nick gets worked up like this, his head starts to twitch to the side like a dog straining at an invisible leash.**

out glimpses of headless bodies and river pirates who attack in long canoes. And have you heard of that exciting new sport, the African high jump? "You've got to get all the body parts across the line," Stan says. "Oops! It doesn't count, you left your foot there."

"It's exciting," Nick says. "It's real exciting. You get out in the jungle sometimes at night and you wonder why you're out there, why you're doing it. But you're dealing with the most precious commodity on the face of the earth and everybody wants it. A little coffee cup can hold a couple million dollars' worth, you know? It's exciting. I'm addicted."

BACK IN HIS HOTEL ROOM Nick calls me over to the window. He's holding a piece of white tissue paper with about twenty pebbles piled in the center. They are chalky white, like something you'd find in the surf. The largest is a brownish stone about the size of a piece of pea gravel.

"This is worth probably \$3,000 a carat," Nick says.

"How many carats?"

"Twenty-two."

"Nice." I say. "It's colored?"

"No, it's just the skin on it that looks brownish like that. And here, you see that little black spot? That's a pique, which is actually just a piece of coal."

This is the kind of thing you can find in the riverbank gravel in Sierra Leone, Nick reminds me. The Star of Sierra Leone weighed in at 968.9 carats. Imagine living in one of the poorest countries in the world and digging up something like that. He gives me a quick lecture on the four C's. "You can buy a round one-carat diamond for \$700 or \$30,000," he says. "It's the color, the clarity, the carat

weight, and the cut. That's what it's all about."

He holds up another pebble. "See how white this one is, and clear and clean?" he says. "Look at that. Look right through there. Hold it up to the light."

AT LUNCH THE NEXT DAY Nick tells us the plan. This is something he enjoys and does frequently. "Tuesday morning we're taking a private jet to Sierra Leone. It's a really nice jet, a Learjet with a stand-up cabin, private head, the whole thing. We're gonna make one stop on this little Portuguese island called São Tomé. It's about 150 miles off the coast. It's really a nice little island."

And why are we stopping there?

"To eat lunch and have a drink, man. What do you think? We got women there, you know?"

By this time, I've figured out that at least half of what Nick says is bullshit. When I first met him, he said he owned a private plane. Now he's leasing one. And he said his family owned twenty-two diamond mines, but it turns out they just invested in them. Now it seems he doesn't have a license to export diamonds from South Africa, so what he was doing with those stones in his hotel room I have no idea. The stories come too thick and fast and there's too much food and too much drink and now we're hitting the road in two white Mercedeses with Global Positioning Systems on the dashboards and Stan and Pete in constant touch on walkie-talkies and Nick digging around in his bag. "What have I got here?"

He pulls out a stack of greenbacks three bricks thick—\$100,000.

James turns around. "Is that the money? I can smell it."

"It's the best smell in the world," Stan says.

Everywhere we go, Stan carries a trauma kit stuffed with medicine and field dressings. Nick says it's so they can stabilize him and radio the jet they keep on call. "It's a Challenger 601," he says. "It was actually Nelson Mandela's private jet. And then Pavarotti used it, and then I picked it up."

Whatever. Where's the next bar?

At a tiny town called Taung, Nick meets with some black land owners looking for someone to help them mine their land. Nick launches into his pitch about how his family has been in the diamond-mining business for fifty-five years and they owned diamond dredges in Guyana and Venezuela and twenty-two mines and when he took over the company in 1997 he came to Africa and started in Guinea and he'd still be there if there wasn't so much corruption, so he moved to Sierra Leone and the people love him there—he's given equipment to hospitals and schools—and with any luck they're going to make him the official exporter for the whole country. And last year he came down here to South Africa to start a polishing school where he's going to teach underprivileged black people how to work diamonds and it will be bigger than anything De Beers has ever done for the people and the beginning of true integration for the diamond industry and the biggest thing the country has ever seen. Margaret Thatcher and Nelson Mandela are going to come for the opening celebration and it's going to be huge. "We make a lot of money, and we pay a lot of taxes, but we get involved with the people personally," Nick gushes. "It's just the way my family's been. When we go into a community, we do things for the hospital, for the schools, bringing in food and clothes. Sometimes it's a lot of money, but sometimes it's not. It's more the thought and the spirit of what you're doing than anything."



Never mind that Margaret Thatcher and Nelson Mandela will be showing up for an Inkatha Freedom party celebration (if at all) and not for Nick's factory opening. Nick keeps rubbing the word *underprivileged* against diamonds until they both shine bright enough to blind you. He weaves so much verbiage around his little piqué of truth that it actually seems to grow into some kind of fabulous gemstone before your eyes. And maybe he even sells himself.

But it turns out that the landowners want a big investment, heavy machinery that will cost almost \$3 million. That's not what Nick had in mind. "We'd like to start with existing operations and work our way back," Nick says. "I'm sure you understand what I'm saying. I'd like to buy some diamonds today."

He laughs and everyone laughs with him. Then one of the landowners speaks in a soft, solemn voice. "But you see, Niko, when our MP said you were coming, we said, Thank God, now we are free. Because our land is very rich but we cannot work it. The banks

Sometimes buying diamonds means selling yourself. Here, with the minister of foreign affairs, Sama Banya, Nick makes his bid to be the face of Sierra Leone to the international business community.



say we have no experience and will not lend us the money."

Nick backs and fills and grouses about banks but holds his ground. "You can have all the land in Africa and I can have one diamond, and I'm a richer man than you are," he says. "You talk about being free? Money is freedom."

IN ANTWERP TODAY, they seized a package of Sierra Leone diamonds. Which shows they're serious about this diamond ban. And the rebels are still holding UN soldiers hostage.

And Nick is sitting down to another lunch. Back when he was in advertising, he says, the big shots used to talk down to him. "I'd say, 'You want to continue this conversation on my boat? Maybe we could continue on your boat? You don't have a boat? Fuck you.'"

Same thing in the diamond business. When he told his father-in-law his idea about buying in bulk, the old man told him it couldn't be done, couldn't be done, he'd been in this business for fifty-five years. Hell, there are Lebanese diamond dealers who wait for weeks in an office for a single stone. "We would have screaming fights," Nick says. "I would tell him, 'You fucking wetback. It's a good thing your daughter's not as big a shit as you are.' Now he works for me."

By the time we meet that night at the casino bar, Nick's Evinrudes are cranked into the red. "The country is just there for the

taking," he says. "A hundred guys and a pair of gunships and you could clean out that jungle in two weeks. A month tops. It wouldn't even cost that much."

When Nick gets worked up like this, his head starts to twitch to the side like a dog straining at an invisible leash. He sits back with his big belly bulging into his silk golf shirt, with the fat silver Dunhill pen and the Bulgari watch and the Tiffany bracelet that comes with its own gold screwdriver, and it's no surprise that he had his first heart attack at thirty-two, while working three phones from a bar stool. "I want to be king," he says, cupping his balls.

As the gamblers behind us drop coins into the slots, their metro-nomic obsession a perfect counterpoint, Nick drinks and rants and drinks some more, gassing on about the incompetence of the UN and the uselessness of women newscasters and all the ridiculous PC bullshit regulations that stifle anyone with a little hustle—like that lazy little bitch who hauled him into court to pay her pregnancy



In Sierra Leone, an American bearing gifts is everybody's friend. The private jet helps. "Small, small, for everyone!" says the big man.

leave and he told the judge, Why the hell should I pay for it? I didn't knock her up!—and most especially the entire fucked-up continent of Africa, where nothing ever gets done right because it's filled with these useless incompetents who can barely shit, shave, and shampoo without detailed instructions. "Those little islands called the United Kingdom, they conquered the whole fucking world. You know why Africa can't do that? 'Cause they can't."

By this time he's twitching pretty hard. When he stops to breathe, he admits the whole Sierra Leone situation has got him a little stressed. "The thing is we're on a plateau of all this shit happening," he says, "and I'm so frustrated I just want to get my boat and check out."

IF HE HAD HIS WAY, Nick would force the Sierra Leone government to hire mercenaries and clean out the rebels. Failing that, he has this plan, which he keeps dribbling out in mysterious hints—to hire someone to secure the area where he owns an interest in some rich mines.

The idea itself isn't completely implausible. In 1995, a mercenary force called Executive Outcomes pushed the rebels to the border with just two hundred men. But there are a few minor sticking points. A few years ago, for instance, the rebels captured another mercenary leader named Colonel Bob McKenzie and tortured him for a few days, then ate him. Or so the story goes. I mention this

to Nick in the car.

"Yeah, well, shit happens."

Then Stan speaks up from the driver's seat, saying that Executive Outcomes doesn't exist anymore and we can fantasize all we want about mercenary armies but "it's just a lie."

Nick leans over to confide in a low voice, "What Stan is concerned about is, we're talking about some badass people, and it might not make me any money to shoot my mouth off. It might get me killed."

He twitches and cups his balls.

AT BREAKFAST, Nick has a Bloody Mary. Then he has another.

At lunch, he suddenly rips his menu in half.

At the mall an hour later, Nick holds up a cheap camera and asks the clerk, "Is this strong?" Just as the clerk starts to answer, Nick drops the camera onto the counter. It clatters violently on the glass.

Yesterday a diamond dealer was arrested in Congo with a million bucks and some diamonds. They took his diamonds and money and accused him of espionage. That makes Nick nervous. It makes me nervous, too. It occurs to me that tomorrow I leave for a war zone with someone who lies as often as a priest says amen. I decide that before we leave, we need to have a long and meaningful talk.

NEXT DAY, AT THE CAPE TOWN AIRPORT, Nick bristles with masculine rich-guy authority. "I do this all the time," he tells the cus-

**At the Freetown airport, Nick is greeted as a messiah. Hugs and hellos and handshakes. "I've got those walkie-talkies for your guys," he says. He spent about \$150 on these walkie-talkies, but they're going down here like loaves and fishes. The crowd buzzes around him like he's Elvis Jesus Gandhi. An official comes up to protest. "This is not right, sir. There's no way to rationalize this."**

tom's lady. "We always load the luggage directly onto the plane." The plane is a long and sleek Lear 35 and it's costing Nick thirty grand to rent, but it's a hell of a way to make a splashy entrance into one of the poorest countries in the world.

We spend the night on Sao Tomé and then get back on the plane, and this time there are no Bloody Marys. Instead Nick starts talking about how beautiful Sierra Leone is and how kind the people are and how much terrible suffering they have endured—and he seems to mean it. "That's why I get off on these tangents about finishing it off," he says. "I believe in finishing."

As we approach Freetown, he takes out a string of silver beads and wraps them around his hands and closes his eyes.

He's praying. The son of a bitch is praying.

And there's the coastline of Sierra Leone, dead ahead.

NICK STEPS OFF THE LEARJET into a crowd of immigration and police and luggage guys and hugs and hellos and handshakes and double handshakes. "I've got those walkie-talkies for your guys," he says. "Four walkie-talkies with five different channels. And who wanted the sunglasses?"

The air is moist and tropical and the warm tarmac gives off an airport smell. The landing field bustles with soldiers and UN helicopters, the pregnant kind with blades that flop over like sagging palm trees.

"And here are the battery chargers," Nick says. "They run on rechargeable batteries, so charge 'em all night. If you don't charge 'em all the way, then the batteries won't last as long."

Nick spent about \$150 on these walkie-talkies, but they're going down here like loaves and fishes. The crowd buzzes around him as if he's Elvis Jesus Gandhi, eventually getting so big that an official comes up to protest. "This is not right, sir. This is not right, sir.

There's no way to rationalize this."

To break it up, Nick pushes a wad of cash on the headman. "Everybody gets small-small," he says.

Over to the side, a group of men in uniform linger. "We're the junior boys. He's the senior man. We won't get any."

YESTERDAY THERE WAS A SKIRMISH near here. There's also persistent trouble with a breakaway group of army soldiers called the West Side Boys. So the best way into town is a big old troop helicopter. Everybody dons headgear to mute the roar. Through the thick little windows, Freetown is a jumble of rusted tin roofs tumbling down green hills into the curve of a beautiful beach. People are lined up in the sand, hauling in fishing nets.

At the henport, more hugs and hellos. A slender African official takes Nick's hand in both of his. "Hello, we have so much love for you," he says.

"I got your e-mail," Nick says.

"I heard what you did for the man out at Lungi airport. You must do the same thing for us here. We need the communications. It is good for the development of the country."

Normally Nick would spend a day in Freetown checking in with Professor Kaikai and then head up to a mountain town called Kenema, where he keeps an office run by a wild Ukrainian who lives with six local women. He'll sit in the office for days while miners and brokers bring diamonds. But with the diamond ban on, he has

no choice but to focus all his attention on his other plan. He wants to become Sierra Leone's official business spokesman and also its official diamond exporter. He's been talking about these schemes for days now, how he's going to promote the wonders of Sierra Leone all over the world and also control every diamond that goes out of the country, raking millions off the top. And it seemed like just more Nickalogue. But now everything about him is serious and focused. Accompanied by his local fixers, a Guinean named Ibrahim Ghussein and Maya Kaikai, the professor's nephew, he makes a quick stop at the hotel and heads straight downtown to meet the minister of mines, first on a long list of government officials Nick hopes to win over. He's so intent, he's like another person.

And Freetown is just how Nick described it. Where I expected CNN's bullet-riddled shambles, the windy, jumbled streets are full of people and roadside stands and children playing. We pass a Catholic school that looks well tended and a Mobil station full of cars. The green hillsides are cut by hundreds of building plots waiting for new houses. This is a war zone?

But the energy sags when we get to the Ministry of Mineral Resources. Three soldiers loiter at the gate, a rooster struts in the courtyard, and the elevator can't be trusted, so we walk up six flights of dank stairs and everywhere we look, people sit slumped over, staring into space. There seem to be at least two people at every post. A guard sleeps with his head on another guard's shoulder.

But when they see Nick, smiles break out, followed by big hellos and hearty handshakes. Without even a moment of waiting, he goes right in to meet the minister, who sits stiffly and nods along as Nick weaves his verbal arabesques. Either he's very tired or bored out of his mind or both. But he seems to want to make Nick happy, promising that the diamonds will certainly start flowing again by the end of the month and mentioning the possibility of restricting export



licenses to "a few people or a few groups."

It's not exactly a promise to make Nick the official Sierra Leone exporter, but it's in the same universe. So I ask the minister directly if he means to suggest that one of those "few people" will in fact be Nick.

He just laughs. "I'm not saying. He has applied and we'll look at his papers alongside the Africans'."

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE, Nick reviews. "They're very nervous. They're being pulled in so many different directions, they don't want to make any commitments. And they really don't have any money. This country is literally down to nothing."

In fact, he says, they're so broke they just asked him for a small contribution, something to help them attend the Diamond Council meeting in Antwerp on Monday. Just a few plane tickets. "We're talking about basics here," he says.

Then it's downstairs to meet the minister of trade and industry, a thin, dignified man who seems to have a perpetual vague smile on his face. This is supposedly the man who is going to make Nick the

tomorrow, he sees the minister of foreign affairs. Then the vice president. And the day after that, with any luck, the president himself.

"Now we're gonna go back to the hotel and drink," he says.

JUST A SHORT WALK from the hotel along the crescent of the harbor is a perfect seaside bar with palm trees and a thatched roof and a patio overlooking the sand. The owner is a bluff Dutchman in a T-shirt and crew cut who brags that he closed only half a day when the rebels attacked Freetown in '99. We lean back in white plastic chairs and admire the view. "Ah, Sierra Leone," Stan says. "The sound of generators humming in the night."

The service is incredibly slow, sparking various jabs at African work habits. The batik vendors who won't go away spark a few more. Ibrahim and Maya Kaikai sit through it without a word. Just before dinner comes, a compact little man in thick glasses strolls over to say hello. He looks like a meter inspector. "This is that pilot I was telling you about," Nick says.

It's Nils, the gunship pilot Nick was going to pay to straighten out some stuff. Someone says something complimentary and Nils shrugs.

The minister of foreign affairs sits stiffly on the sofa, not even looking at Nick. Nick just sells harder. "Like I said, I'm a businessman. We have a very large presence in South Africa. We're spending more than a million dollars on this polishing factory. And it's not just a polishing factory for us to polish diamonds—it's a school for the black-empowerment movement."

country's international business spokesman, so Nick launches into the whole pitch about how he came to Sierra Leone and fell in love with the place and the beauty and the people who are so gentle and how he wants to do something for them. "Not just the diamond business, but other business. Like this polishing factory that we're doing in South Africa. We want to open a diamond-polishing factory here."

"Mmm-hmm," the minister says.

"And that's going to have a trickle-down effect. I mean, we're gonna have to supply those polishing factories, and they're gonna have to have roads made and people are gonna need other supplies and equipment and repairs in cars and roads and trains and everything."

"Mmm-hmm," the minister says.

"But I'm also in the development business, the real estate development business. We're talking about developing a couple of hotels down here, which is not a difficult thing to do for me in this country. I mean the natural beauty is incredible here."

The minister seems mildly bemused by Nick—this oddball American with the big belly and Bulgarian watch and Dunhill pen and salesman's spiel. But he also seems—yes, he really does—to be fond of him. He's soaking up all Nick's horseshit like an indulgent father.

"Are you really going to make Nick an official representative of the Sierra Leone government?" I ask.

"Oh, sure," he says.

"Really?" I say. "In what capacity?"

Nick jumps in, grinning. "I wanted to be king, but he said no."

The minister frowns at me and speaks firmly, as if eager to correct my cynicism. "In the capacity of somebody who's shared our aspirations at this very critical moment," he says.

And that's when it hits me—in this context, in this raped and abandoned country, a guy like Nick must seem almost lovable. After all, how many international diamond dealers parade through government offices bragging about all the money they have? How many give even a penny away? How many even bother to say a kind word?

"The exact position is gonna be determined in the very near future," Nick says.

The minister gives him another indulgent smile.

In the hallway a few minutes later, Nick heaves a satisfied sigh. To-

"I'm a white man in Africa. I'm nothing."

He tells Nick he'll see him tomorrow at the hotel.

Over grilled fish, Nick relaxes. "Look at this cove. Can you imagine just filling this full of restaurants? They've got the second-largest rutile deposit in the world, if they could just get peace, in a year there'd be six or seven companies in here. In five years they'd be exporting fish, shrimp."

IN THE MORNING, Nick goes for a walk on the beach. This is a kind of tradition with him, a declaration of purpose, a chance to represent the good life. Anyway, that's how he explained it. Today he knocks on my door as he goes past and I jump into the shower and hurry after. As I get through the gate, a tall man in shorts approaches me. "Where's Mr. Karras? Every morning he goes down on the beach with Stan."

"I think they've already gone," I say.

We walk together. He says his name is Guzman and he's in the diamond business, that every morning dealers and buyers walk up and down the beach doing business. "I have a big stone," he says. "Seventy-five carats."

"Seventy-five carats? You have it here?"

"No, not here. I go get it. I go get it from the rebels. They're hungry. They need to sell something and buy some weapons."

A moment later, he bends over to show me the scar on his head. "They did this to me," he says. "I don't even have shoes. Nothing else. They killed my family. Everything gone. But I still hold my mind."

Up ahead Nick is walking in his khaki shorts with his shirt open, exposing his sultanic belly, moving in the deliberate way of men who take possession of a place by walking through it. We catch up and Guzman talks to Stan for a moment and then drops behind ten paces. He seems disappointed.

THE CAPE SIERRA HOTEL is a desolate cement pile out on a well-guarded point, perhaps the safest place in all of Freetown. This is where the diamond dealers and mercenaries stay, where the journalists gather whenever the war gets particularly exciting. Every night, beautiful young prostitutes gather in the bar and if you are



Nick, pensive at a refueling stop in the African desert: The plane costs \$32,800 for two days, but every great actor needs his props.

even vaguely polite, they will follow you halfway to your room. The patio is unfinished and there's mold on the tennis court and out by the pool there's a bathroom sink sitting in the grass.

This is where Nick does much of his business. This morning, he's waiting for Nils. He won't say what for. Apparently I have asked one too many questions about his plan to "secure an area." And it's possible that he got offended back in Cape Town when we had that deep and meaningful conversation and I called him a brazen, bold faced, low life liar. All he'll tell me is that Nils has family in South Africa and they're going to talk about something personal—in private.

A few minutes later he slips away.

Ten minutes after that, I find him upstairs in the restaurant. I give him a big smile and sit down.

Five minutes later, he says he's going to his room for a while. A few minutes after that, I see him walking through the lobby with Nils—off for that private chat.

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS sits stiffly on the sofa, staring at the coffee table, not even looking at Nick.

Nick just sells harder. He goes through the whole pitch about his family holdings in South America and his polishing factory in South Africa and all the things he's donated, the computers and the radios, and he just bought a sonogram machine and an X-ray machine and a heart monitor and he's going to bring them very soon. "I want to do what I can," he says. "I have a lot of influential, very powerful friends. I know some of the biggest businesspeople in the world. We just donated eight million leones for the war effort three weeks ago. So I wanted to let you know that I'm doing whatever I can and I'm not gonna leave you alone. I feel part of Sierra Leone."

When there's a lull, the minister says in the mildest of voices that his government wants to be honest. "We will not tolerate the

fly-by-night businesspeople who deal with the fellows in the hotels and then fly off."

Nick nods his head eagerly. "Like I said, I'm a businessman. If you want me to do something or go see somebody, I'll do that. We have a very large presence in South Africa. We have an office in Cape Town. We're spending more than a million dollars on this polishing factory. And it's not just a polishing factory for us to polish diamonds, it's a school for the black-empowerment movement."

The minister smiles and asks us to sign his visitor book.

THE VICE PRESIDENT is in a meeting, so we go to a chicken place called the Crown Bakery to wait. An hour goes by and then a stunning young woman with blond cornrows walks up to the counter. "You want her?" Nick says. "I'll buy her for you. Ten dollars. She's yours."

Out on the street, you can buy hardware and building materials, and the sidewalks are overflowing with busy people. I spot a foreign woman haggling over a pair of tin snips, completely at home in an African dress. She says her name is Susan and she's Russian and she's been living at the Cape Sierra for three years.

"What are you doing here?" I ask.

"Business," she says.

"The diamond business?"

"Business," she repeats.

Back at the restaurant, Nick is giving an interview to one of the local newspapers about the walkie-talkies he donated. Then word comes from the vice-president's office and we hop into the cars and head up into the hills, past the American embassy and the big houses overlooking the bay. The vice-president's house is a graceless white box with an empty pool and a sandbag pillbox. A dozen soldiers guard the door.

Nick goes right in.

Half an hour later, he says it went very well. "He understands the problem. We're gonna travel together, go [continued on page 127]



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## The Opportunist

(continued from page 125) to meetings together—business meetings."

Every night, people come to the Cape Sierra hoping to see Nick, some with appointments and some who press notes into your hands and look desperate. The official who estimates diamonds for the government comes once. The diamond officer from the heliport shows up two nights running, slender and solemn and glistening in the heat, talking to anyone who will listen about how much he admires Nick. "He was able to donate some amount of money eight million leones, to the war effort," he tells me, "and now I hear that he's donated communication equipment to the monitoring unit of the Ministry of Mineral Resources. It is the very first time in my own capacity as an employee of the Ministry of Mineral Resources that somebody has donated such valuable equipment that can be used for the benefit of this country."

Tonight it's Professor Kaikai's turn. He's tall and lean and looks sophisticated, a man of the world. He goes straight to Nick's suite. They talk privately for a long time. When I join them, he tells me he thinks that the diamond embargo will be lifted very soon and things are on the verge of turning around and when they do, Nick is going to be a major part of it. "He's the kind of businessman we need in this country. He could be someplace else investing his money. He could be someplace else with his energies and his time. But he's seen

the potential in the country and he's willing to invest a lot of his time and his money in a place like this. The fact that he was able to see the vice-president today is testimony to that."

It's almost like a policy statement, and Kaikai is almost too smooth, the kind of man who looks at the world through half-lidded eyes and keeps his real opinions to himself.

But there does seem to be some kind of real intimacy between them, oddly matched as they are. He mentions the day Nick donated money and computers to the vocational school and the computer he gave to the local government and the eight million leones for the war effort. Sure, that's only about \$4,000 American, but there's another way of looking at it. "To put that in perspective," Kaikai says, "the entire Lebanese community only donated twenty-five million leones." It's as if something in Nick's blistering, hungry energy has actually touched him, not because Nick employs his nephew or because he's fool enough to think everything Nick says is true but because the vast effort Nick puts into coming up with all his ridiculous bullshit represents some kind of hope. "There are very few businesspeople who come into a place like this and start doing something for the people," Kaikai tells me. "To think in terms of the people in the country and to try to actualize that is the thing I find fascinating about him."

In the morning, Nick says the meeting with the president is up in the air. "You know, it's the difference between 'now-now' and 'just now.' 'Just now' means 'I'll do it right now.'"

'Now now' means 'at some point.' This is Africa, you know."

So Nick's going to take it easy, do some paperwork. I spend the day in town, talking to local businessmen and to a couple of newspaper editors. In contrast to the government officials I've been meeting with Nick, all are very fatalistic. They say the government is too weak to do anything and that diamonds corrupt every armed group that gets anywhere near them, including government troops. Including the government. Because the distinction between rebel "blood" diamonds and "legitimate" government diamonds is a fiction. Because the rebels don't just smuggle their diamonds through Liberia, they also sell stones to the licensed diamond brokers who sell to people like Nick. The rebels control 90 percent of the diamond fields, so where else would the "legitimate" diamonds come from? They say all this in a matter-of-fact way, as if everyone knows it. Which means that for all of Nick's talk about wanting to do good, and despite doing everything legally, he's almost certainly been dealing in blood diamonds.

Later that day, a group of prominent local engineers laugh when I tell them Nick thinks he's going to be Sierra Leone's official diamond exporter. There's no way the export licenses will be limited to one person, they say. There will be at least five. And there is some for midsize competition among them an international diamond-dealing company called the Rappaport Group, which is like Exxon to Nick's lone rig.

That night at the hotel bar, just before din-

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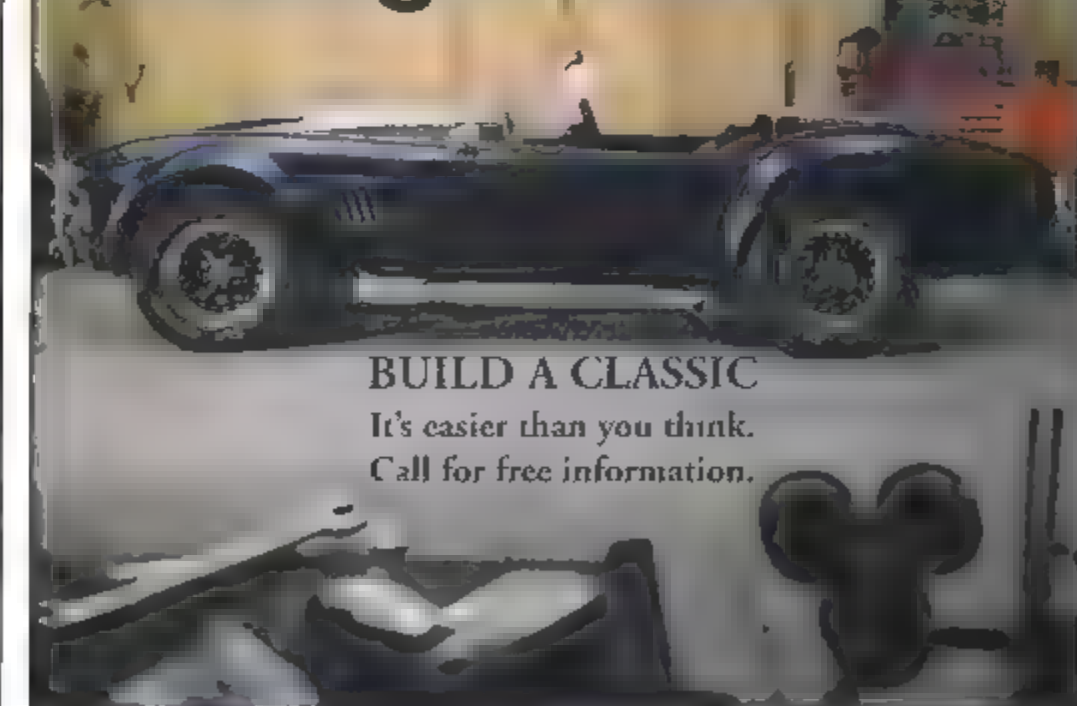
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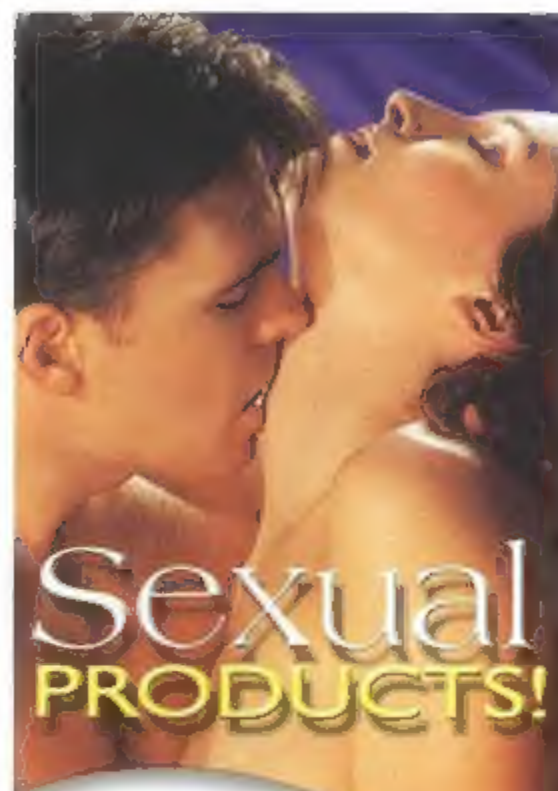
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## The Opportunist

ner, the professor shows up again. Since Nick's running a little late, I take the opportunity to ask a few rude questions. Like, isn't it a little questionable for Nick to buy plane tickets for government officials who will vote on his export license? Kaikai smiles. "How is that different from a congressman in the United States being flown around on a corporate jet?" he says. "This is part of international business. As long as it's up and above and there's no strings attached, it's all right."

And what about the Rappaport Group? Is Nick fooling himself with this export-license thing?

He smiles again. "Let me put it to you this way," he says. "When we were in the midst of our troubles, what did any of those people do for us? Did they contribute? Maybe they did. I'm not aware of it. De Beers was here. Did they contribute? Maybe they did. I'm not aware of it. So when you consider a smaller person who's demonstrated an interest in the country..."

At dinner, Nils shows up with a beautiful African girl on his arm.

In the parking lot, Nick pulls Nils aside and mutters something. Nils nods and says, "Okay, get me a phone number."

Nils's real name is Neill Ellis and he's fifty years old and he fought with the South African army in Angola and Rhodesia and a little bit of Mozambique but then peace brought too much paperwork and he came to Sierra Leone with Executive Outcomes. That was in '95. He came back in '98 with another private outfit called Sandline, him and a Lebanese guy called Hassan and an Ethiopian named Sindaba and Juba the copilot and Fred the sixty-year-old gunner. When Sandline decided to pull out, it offered them the helicopter in lieu of outstanding salaries. So they stayed and for two years they were the only helicopter gunship in Sierra Leone—maybe the only thing here as hard and real as a diamond. And Nils is pretty hard and real himself. He makes no unnecessary motions. He has a quick little smile that seems oddly disconnected down there under his thick glasses. And he seems to have very little patience for bullshit of any kind. "Until the diamond business is regulated, properly regulated, then this war will carry on," he says flatly. "And it's going to be very difficult to stop. I mean, even the ECOMOG and the UNAMSIL people are involved in diamond mining."

Really? The UN troops? The troops from neighboring countries? Even the local journalists didn't go that far.

"Well, look, I'm not saying that I've got proof for sure. But this is Sierra Leone. And diamonds is what makes this country talk."

Nils is such a straight shooter that I decide to just blurt out the question on my mind. "The other day, when you and Nick went off, did Nick talk to you about securing a diamond area?"

"It depends on what you mean by securing a diamond area," he says.

Heavy rains in the night leave a damp smell of cement rot in the hotel and all the phone lines in Freetown dead, even the lines into the army. It'll be a slow war today. But Nick comes to breakfast saying he wants to buy a house near Cape Town that's just unbelievable, four bedrooms and a gorgeous garden and the mountains with the grapevines and just half a million dollars and he's going to buy some polo ponies down in Argentina—buy two hundred polo ponies and ship them to Florida and sell 180 of them and then he'd have twenty for free, see, and he'd ship those to California. And a couple to Cape Town. And look, here's an article about him in today's paper. "In a big move to enhancing the smooth and effective operations of the Mines Monitoring Officers in the Ministry of Mineral Resources, a United States investor Wednesday donated five handsets worth thousands of U. S. dollars..."

Then it's time to go. At the heliport, the diamond officer who kept coming to the hotel to see Nick stands behind a rickety wooden desk in a stick hut. "He needs a new office," Nick says. "We're gonna build another one."

"Please," says the diamond officer. He waves us through.

Then the minister of mines comes in and nods to Nick and they usher him through to a private place and right behind him comes Susan, the Russian woman I ran into in the market. She's escorting a beautiful milk-chocolate girl in chic clothes that are very tight. Then we all turn in our hand-carved wooden boarding passes and get on the helicopter, and when we get to the airport, Nick goes through another gantlet of eager baggage handlers and government officials—there's the head of the army police and the head of the airport diamond office and Nick takes a moment with each of them, passing out money and telling the headman to give everybody small-small. An hour later we're in Gambia.

Nick kicks back at the outdoor bar. Ahh, civilization. The Lebanese built this airport back when Gambia was a big nothing like Sierra Leone, there for the taking. Which gets Nick talking about the shrimp and the fishing and the rutile and the diamonds and his boat. And the deck where he will land his helicopter. And the helicopter. And most of all—because this is what it's really about—the pure feeling of being a thousand miles out to sea with nothing between the sky and the water but a little speck of Nick Karras. Back in Sierra Leone he needed to care about the suffering people and so he did care about the suffering people. He really did. Nick can talk himself into anything. But that was then and this is Gambia and right now he feels gloriously free and freedom, baby, is what it's really about. "Three years and I'm out of here," he says. "A citizen of the world."

Three months later, the diamond embargo was lifted, and Nick Karras was issued the very first export certificate by the government of Sierra Leone—number 000001. #



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## Market

[continued from page 34] like that put investment in these old stocks on a par with investments in Mexico or Asia at the times of the international debt crises. In fact, today many of the emerging markets, which most asset managers regard as supremely risky places for American money, are less volatile than these former crown jewels of the American market. For much of the last year, the Korean stock market was only half as volatile as Lucent.

My analysis is admittedly colored by a rough-and-tumble year in the market and by the assumption that the stocks of the sort I'm looking at have entered into a prolonged period of adjustment and risk. Of course, past volatility is not an infallible predictor of the future, but some traits of these companies—such as routine earnings shortfalls and pronounced turnover in the executive ranks—are pretty good signs that there is plenty of tumult still to come.

The upside of all this risk and the punishment these stocks have taken is that there

just might be a tremendous reward waiting for those who plunge in today. Though not always true in practice, one Wall Street rule of thumb is that highly volatile, highly risky asset classes can reward risk takers with outsized returns. Looking at AT&T (and its Baby T's) as a beat-up growth stock or a sad-sack value stock may not make it attractive. But look at it as highly speculative, like a tech stock or an emerging-market index fund, and the payoff might be great.

Investing in a few of these stocks brings the usual benefits of diversification; volatility of the bunch will be lower than that of the component parts, and you'll still get a piece of the winners. Most of these companies—Motorola, Lucent, Polaroid, Ericsson, and AT&T and its children, for instance—have a surplus of genius on staff. Their managements just may figure out how best to marshal their geniuses, and then look out.

Don't bet as much as granny did on these stocks—like any speculative corner of your portfolio, they shouldn't bear more than 10 percent of your stash—but bet some. For the rush. ■

## Green

[continued from page 37] sets at all. Its enormous warehouses in Nevada, Georgia, Kansas, North Dakota, and Kentucky are state-of-the-art, its customer database is the very best in the industry, and its ability to charge rent to "trusted partner" stores for access to Amazon's customers (drugstore.com is paying \$105 million for three years atop Amazon's "storefront") make it a media company, able to collect in ways Toys "R" Us hardly could. I love Amazon. I've dropped about ten grand there and will continue to make it the first place I look online for purchases. But I've never owned a single share. And after all the pros and cons, here are three reasons I'm still not going near the stock.

1) The surge in Amazon's stock price was obviously unjustifiable, but the one excuse longs would cite when pretending they weren't simply insane was that its growth rate justified the price. And grow it did. But according to PC Data, September marked the second straight month that buying activity online remained unchanged. While Amazon retained the number-one position with 1.6 million customers, flat activity will be deadly for a company that's yet to show a profit.

2) You've heard about the cash crunch that's crippling dot-coms. Many burned through a lot of their IPO and venture cash and are unlikely to pull off secondary offerings or find new funding. But Amazon, almost alone among New Economy companies, was respected enough to pull off a bond offering. With about \$2 billion in corporate bonds, Amazon's interest expenses are a drain on cash flow. More alarming, according to bond investors Bridgewater Associates, Amazon debt is trading at 50 cents on the dollar—junk-bond territory. Bond in-

vestors are often smarter and more farsighted than stock investors, and if they're right this time, Amazon's already battered stock has a lot of downside room.

3) When Amazon's Q3 earnings came out, analysts called it a blowout quarter; revenues were 79 percent higher than last year's Q3, and losses were 25 cents a share against an expected 33 cents, better than the 26 cents lost last year. So why am I worried? Well, a loss of 25 cents a share comes out to a quarterly loss of \$68 million. On sales of \$638 million, that's more than a dime lost on every dollar transacted. And I don't buy these year-to-year comparisons. They work fine for GM and Boeing, whose customer bases are meaningfully comparable from one year to the next. But New Economy companies want it both ways; they think they deserve high stock multiples because of their awesome sequential (quarter-to-quarter) growth, but at earnings time, they emphasize last year's results. Looking at Amazon on a quarterly basis, Q3's \$638 mil is a respectable 10 percent higher than Q2's \$578 mil. But the previous quarter was only \$574 million—an anemic .70 percent quarterly growth rate. Finally, \$20 million of that \$638 million in revs was from a "sale" of Amazon inventory to Toys "R" Us and represents exactly what Amazon paid for the goods. I guess when you're losing money on every sale, a break-even exchange looks great.

Amazon is expecting sales in the critical fourth-quarter holiday season to be just about a billion. If the company exceeds that and is also able to shrink its loss on every sale, it may be poised to capitalize on the very real advantages it enjoys over its competitors. But if the company falls short, either on sales or on margins, those who think \$35 is a bottom for this stock are going to be sorely mistaken. ■

## The Game

[continued from page 42] emperors do not work late. They hire people for that.

We should deal with the phenomenon of the Unfortunate Face, if only because Steve Spurrier has one, and if only because it is an important phenomenon now that every single bit of every single sporting event is on television. Some participants simply have an Unfortunate Face. Danny Ainge had one when he played for the Celtics. Bobby Valentine manages the Mets with a Very Unfortunate Face.

The problem with the Unfortunate Face is that it registers emotion in an audibly high-pitched whine. It doesn't matter what is being said. The person with the Unfortunate Face could be reading Lincoln's Second Inaugural. He could be reciting the Agincourt speech from Henry V. He could be intoning Gregorian chant. It doesn't matter. The person with the Unfortunate Face looks in every case as if he's about to throw his strained peas at you. It is not something that generates sympathy, not even when the person with the Unfortunate Face is right.

And Spurrier is right on this one, damn him, anyway.

Auburn comes into Ben Hill Griffin Stadium and manages to stay close at 14-7 until the second quarter, when the roof caves in. On a second-down play, Florida throws a sideways pass to Jabar Gaffney, who rolls in from twenty yards. However, the referee has thrown a flag, and Florida is called for illegal blocking downfield, which you cannot do on a forward pass.

The Unfortunate Face turns beet red as Spurrier goes suborbital. He argues that Gaffney caught the ball behind the line of scrimmage and that, therefore, Florida's players are perfectly entitled to block downfield for him. He drew up the play, dadgummit, and he knows the rules good and well enough, better than the referees do at this particular point in time. The referees gather in the middle of the field and, yes, they reverse themselves in a burst of authentic football gibberish. Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville's face becomes a map of disbelief—Sure, why don't you just let him call the game, too?—as Spurrier does a dance of exaltation, and you can almost hear (clickety-buzz!) hundreds of people logging on to a certain impolite Web site.

The play breaks the game open and Florida wins, 38-7, moving into national-championship contention again. The empire decamps as night falls. The smoke dissipates into the twilight. The music dies away, and people start filing out of St. Augustine's after the evening mass is over. Down deep in the stadium, talking about the controversial play, Spurrier explains, "I said that he threw the ball behind the line, and we can block on that, so the official goes back and talks to the other guys, and they tell him it was behind the line, and he comes back and says, 'Well, that's a touchdown.'"

"I said, 'Well, that's what we said in the first place.'"

And then he smiles, or something very much like it, anyway. ■

## Credits

Store Information Table of Contents, p. 8: Audemars Piguet watch at Cellini, New York.

The Guide, p. 55: Prada bag at Prada, New York, Beverly Hills, and Bal Harbour, FL. Trussardi bag at Saks Fifth Avenue select stores. Hermès bag at Hermès nationwide. Brioni bag by special order at Brioni, New York. P. 56: Salvatore Ferragamo suitcase at Salvatore Ferragamo nationwide. Polo Ralph Lauren Luggage suitcase at Polo/Ralph Lauren select stores. Louis Vuitton suitcase at Louis Vuitton nationwide. P. 57: Trussardi suitcases at Barneys New York select stores. Ermenegildo Zegna bag at Ermenegildo Zegna nationwide. Valxtra suitcase at Bergdorf Goodman, New York. Prada suitcase at Prada, New York. P. 58: Ermenegildo Zegna garment bag at Ermenegildo Zegna nationwide. Polo Ralph Lauren Luggage garment bag at Polo/Ralph Lauren select stores. Hermès garment bag at Hermès nationwide. Burberry suitcase at Burberry select stores. Holland & Holland trolley at Holland & Holland, New York. Gucci suitcase at Gucci select stores. Tumi trolley at Tumi nationwide. Louis Vuitton suitcase at Louis Vuitton nationwide.

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## Mrs. Glickman's Deposition

By Alan Zweibel

**Setting:** A lawyer's office in Los Angeles.

**Situation:** Two years ago, I was involved in an auto accident with an eighty-one-year-old woman. Although my insurance company made several attempts to settle with her, she was now suing me.

**Her claim:** That, as a result of injuries sustained from the accident, this now eighty-three-year-old woman has not been able to sexually satisfy her eighty-seven-year-old husband.

**In attendance:** Me, the woman, her husband, my attorney, her attorney, and a very fat female court reporter.

**Note:** The following were the exchanges—not entirely faithful, perhaps, but the way I remember them—between my attorney and the now eighty-three-year-old woman unless otherwise indicated. (And I've also changed the old crone's name.)

**Q:** Your name is Rita Glickman?  
**A:** Yes.

**Q:** And you understand, Mrs. Glickman, that due to the nature of your claim, I may have to get somewhat personal with my questions?  
**A:** Yes...

**Q:** So to investigate this fully, you understand that I may have to ask some rather embarrassing questions, such as, Before the accident, how often did you and your husband engage in marital relations?  
**A:** Four times a week.

**Q:** Excuse me?

**A:** Four times a week.

**Q:** Perhaps you didn't understand my question...

**A:** What's not to understand? Before this hooligan slammed into me, Gerry and I had sex four times a week.

**Q:** And by sex you are referring to...?

**A:** Intercourse.

**Q:** Intercourse.

**A:** Intercourse.

**Q:** Four times a week.

**A:** Yes, we had intercourse four

times a week.

*(The fat court reporter starts blushing.)*

**Q:** Now, when you say four times a week—strike that. Mrs. Glickman, was it exactly four times a week, or would you say it was an average of four times a week?

**A:** I'm not sure I understand the question.

**Q:** Well, by exactly four times a week, I'm asking if it was literally that, four times a week every single week. On the other hand, let's say you were tired or not feeling well one particular week so you only had intercourse twice, would you make up for it by having intercourse six times the following week? Or let's say you—strike that. Do you understand the difference?

**A:** Now I do.

**Q:** So your response would then be...?

**A:** Four times every single week.

**Q:** Fifty-two weeks a year?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** And you've been married for...?

**A:** Sixty-one years.

**Q:** So 4 times 52 is 208... multiplied by 61...

**Her lawyer:** Counsel, I hardly see the relevance of computing precisely how many times the Glickmans had intercourse during the past sixty-one years.

**Me:** I'd like to know that number.

**Q:** Okay, let's proceed. Now, Mrs. Glickman, on the morning of November 18 of last year, you had a collision with Mr. Zweibel, and you sustained some injuries.

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** And what exactly was the nature of those injuries?

**A:** I had bruises across my chest and contusions on my left hip.

**Q:** And because of these injuries, you claim there was an interruption of your and Mr. Glickman's regular sexual activity.

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** And why was that?

**A:** I was in too much pain to accommodate the weight of my husband's body.

*(Everyone steals a peek at Gerry Glickman.)*

Plus, he likes to move around a lot, and I just couldn't keep up.

*(Everyone steals another peek at Gerry Glickman.)*

**Q:** I see. And for how long were you unable to accommodate your husband's weight and move-

ment—strike that. How long was it until you were able to resume normal relations?

**A:** Seven months.

**Q:** So you're saying that for seven months following your accident with Mr. Zweibel, you had...

**A:** No sex.

**Q:** And after those seven months, when all your wounds were healed, you and your husband returned to your regular rate of intimacy?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Which is...?

**A:** Four times a week.

**Q:** Four times a week.

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** And when you stated that for that seven-month period you and your husband had no sex, by sex you were referring to...

**A:** Intercourse.

**Q:** Intercourse.

**A:** Yes, intercourse.

**Q:** Now, Mrs. Glickman, you do know that there are other ways—strike that. Were there any other ways you were able to show affection during this seven-month period?

**A:** Other than kissing and hugging?

**Q:** Yes.

**A:** No, I couldn't.

**Q:** And why was that?

**A:** Because I also hurt my jaw.

**Her lawyer:** Jesus.

**Q:** I would like to remind you that you are under oath, Mrs. Glickman.

**A:** But I *did* hurt my jaw. It's right there in my hospital records.

**Q:** Yeah, yeah, I saw them...

Now, were there any other injuries from this accident that affected your marital relations with Mr. Glickman?

**A:** Well, I did suffer a loss of hearing.

**Q:** Your hearing loss has hurt your sex life?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** How so?

**A:** Because sometimes it's difficult for me to hear what Gerry would like me to do. You see, Gerry's very expressive, and if I'm looking at him, I can read his lips. But when I'm facing another direction and Gerry issues a command...

**Her lawyer:** I think this would be a good time to take a break.

**My lawyer:** Me too.

**Me:** Absolutely.

*(During the break, the court reporter used the phone, Mrs. Glickman read a magazine, and everyone else followed her husband into the men's room.)*



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